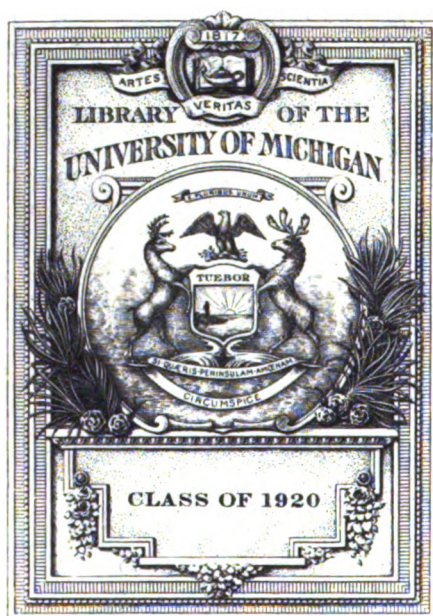

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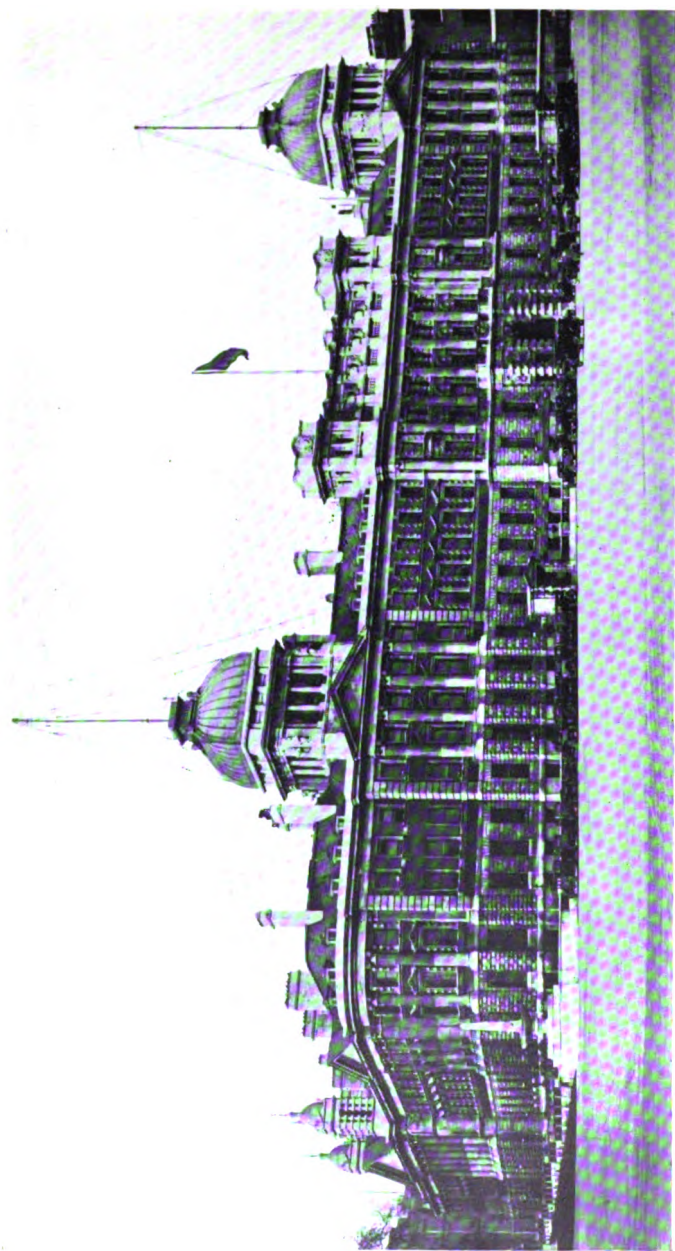


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THE ADMIRALTY

40 O.B.

Or

HOW THE WAR WAS WON

by

HUGH CLELAND HOY

foreword by

SIR BASIL THOMSON, K.C.B.

WITH 31 ILLUSTRATIONS

NINTH IMPRESSION

LONDON :

HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers) LTD.



Printed in Great Britain at
The Mayflower Press, Plymouth. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.
1932

**TO
MY WIFE**

In memory of valuable assistance
so willingly rendered in 1917
& gratefully acknowledged

Jellicoe

at
1/11/20

An autograph to the Author from Admiral Earl Jellicoe's book
The Grand Fleet 1914-1916

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FOREWORD

AS a private secretary to the Director of Naval Intelligence, and from November 1916 to December 1917 entrusted with Lord Jellicoe's most confidential correspondence, and later, as secretary to Lord Long, the author was one of those who learned some of the most vital secrets of the World War. Those who may think that such secrets should never be divulged should remember that if another world war were to come within this or the next generation civilisation would be wiped out : if it were to come a century hence the conditions would be so different from what they were in 1914 that in either case the revelation could do no harm. On the contrary it is right that the country should know the great part played by the British Naval Intelligence in the victory of the Allies. An efficient Intelligence Service in war time is as necessary to governments as eyes and ears are to an individual. The Germans knew this and on the technical side of codes and secret inks they were remarkably well equipped, but they made the mistake of underestimating the astuteness of their antagonists and they were sadly lacking in imagination. When a German expert declared that his code defied the decipherer, his employers took him at his word and continued to fill the ether with messages that were priceless to their enemies.

These messages, whether idle boastings by Zeppelin commanders returning from a raid of feats that they

had never performed, or chaffering with neutral countries for the price of their support to the Central Powers, or revealing the plan of an impending attack, were infinitely more valuable than the best spy could possibly furnish, coming as they did "straight from the horse's mouth." This childlike confidence in their own ingenuity ; this obtuseness in undervaluing the resources and in misjudging the psychology of other nations cost the Germans dear.

The time has now come for lifting the veil that has concealed the activities of the Naval Intelligence during the War. The genius and imagination of its chief, Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, impressed me from the day on which I met him for the first time. I never pressed him for the source of his information : it was enough for me that its accuracy in every instance was proved by events. I never entered the room known as "40 O.B.", nor did I ask to be allowed to see it. I was content to profit, like the heads of other departments, from its extraordinary proficiency and to know that any discovery made from the garrulity of the enemy that concerned my department would be certain to reach me. To cite but one example : on Easter Saturday, 1916, I was taking my turn of Zeppelin duty in my office at 10.30 p.m. when I was called up on the private Admiralty wire. The voice I knew said, "B. T., you remember that stranger who landed from a collapsible boat at Currahane ? Do you know who he is ?" I said, "You're joking ?" "I'm not. He will be over here to-morrow morning for you to take him in hand." It was unnecessary for either of us to mention a name : for weeks the Germans had been telling the Admiralty Intelligence about the movements of Sir Roger Casement without

dreaming that their messages were being intercepted and their code deciphered.

Admiral Hall's genius lay not only in organising the admirable service which deciphered these compromising messages, but in knowing by instinct how most effectively to use them. It was his handling of the famous Zimmermann-Carranza message (promising the States of New Mexico, Texas and Arizona to Mexico if she would declare war on the United States) that did more towards bringing America into the War than the sinking of the *Lusitania* had done, for if he had used the ordinary diplomatic channels it might never have reached President Wilson, who had an old-standing grievance against Carranza. The Admiral was aware of this and decided to make the communication through a trusted American friend. What the French owed to the Intelligence Division through the author for his timely notice of the impending German assault upon Verdun is little known: what Lord Jellicoe and the Grand Fleet owed to him can only be told in Lord Jellicoe's own words. It is not too much to say that but for "Room 40 O.B." of the Admiralty Intelligence and its chief, the Americans might not have entered the War when the waning man-power of the Allies most needed them, and the heroism of our men in the field might have been spent in vain.

Basil Thomson

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40 O.B.

CHAPTER I

VARIOUS factors have impelled me to write a book of reminiscences of the years which I spent in the Admiralty service during the War. I am not conceited enough to imagine that my own infinitesimal part in the vast War scheme merits literary record, or that the service which I rendered or the incidents which I have to relate add any authoritative footnotes to the official history. At the same time, I am advised by many friends, some of whom held high official appointments in those critical years from 1914 to 1918, that the lay reader is often more disposed to dip into personal records and to find interest in individual anecdotage than to digest the ponderous tomes and exhaustive records of historical science.

This being so, I have gathered together in this volume recollections and reflections on the events and personalities with which I came into contact through my association with the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty, where I was employed in a position of trust throughout the War.

It will be understood that, while exercising my memory concerning those vital happenings, I have also been obliged to omit many startling and exciting

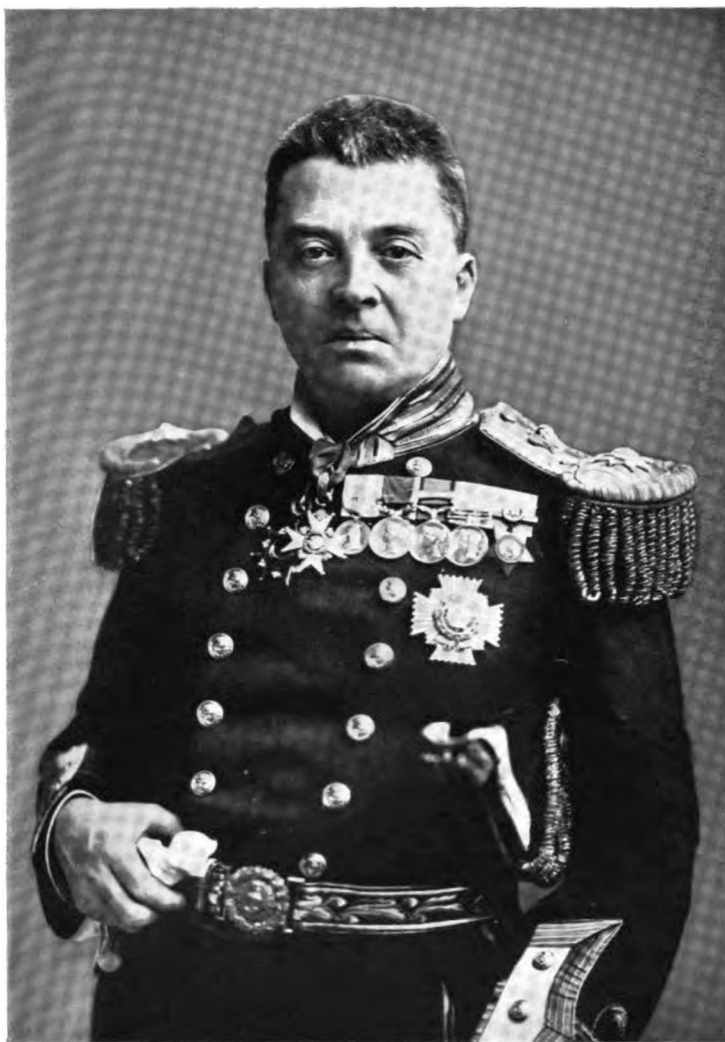
matters. The Official Secrets Act is far-reaching, and I am also bound by personal loyalty to the service, to my superiors in that service, and to the promptings of humanity and the demands of social obligation. So in making this compilation I have had to remember—and also to forget.

The great share which the Royal Navy had in winning the War is still underestimated by the general public, especially, I find, by the younger generation. As one who was privileged to observe at close quarters certain aspects of the work of the senior service and silent service, I trust that this book will, in some small way, help to reimpress upon the minds of readers the debt that Great Britain, the Empire and especially our later Allies owe to our Navy. If it succeeds in this, this book—the work of an inexperienced scribe—will have achieved my main object, which I regard it as an obligation and an honour to attempt.

Of late years, since the official ban has been lifted from the narration of some part of the wonderful story of British naval achievement, several valuable historical and popular works have been published respecting various particular aspects of that achievement. To mention but a few I may cite here :

Freedom of the Seas, by Lieut.-Commander the Hon. J. M. Kenworthy and George Young, which traces in the most authoritative and vivid manner the developments in our sea power from pre-War days up to the present moment ; a book which sparkles with admiration of the British Navy and faith in its future.

By Guess and By God, the racy narrative in which Lieutenant William Guy Carr tells of the activities



Press Portrait Bureau

THE LATE LORD FISHER
First Sea Lord, 1914.



Topical Press

EARL JELlicoe, O.M., G.C.B., G.C.V.O.
Commander-in-Chief, Grand Fleet, 1914-1916.

of the British submarines and gives intimate pictures of life below seas.

Strange Intelligence, by Hector Bywater and H. C. Ferraby, which deals vividly with the work of the naval secret service organisation, both before and during the War.

Verdun, by Marshal Petain, for some of the details of this historic battle.

War in the Air, by H. A. Jones, helped me with some of the records I give concerning the air raids on England.

To some of these authors I am indebted, having refreshed my memory as to dates and sequence of incidents from their work. I have also referred to the official histories in order to link up my personal experiences with the main trend of events and so to show the relevance of the work of 40 O.B., the Naval Intelligence Division, and my own humble activities, upon the general conduct of the War. Any indebtedness to these authors and publishers not explicitly indicated in footnotes is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

During my engagement as confidential Assistant to the Director of Naval Intelligence, two things impressed me most—the selfless devotion of the whole naval personnel to the task in hand and their indifference to popular blame and acclaim. I came across all sorts and conditions of men from A.B.'s to admirals. But I never encountered one who was not solely concerned with his part in the prosecution of the great game and contemptuous of popularity and oblivious of censure—save when it touched upon the good faith of his superior officers.

The men of the senior service were content to do

their job and leave it to others to do the talking. They had no Press agents, and—unlike some of their colleagues of the junior service—did not welcome war correspondents. Distinguished publicists did not joy-ride with the Grand Fleet or in subs. and Q ships. The silent service lived up to its name.

And when we turn to the very nerve-centre of naval activity, the Intelligence Division, the silence was, in the poetic phrase, a silence that could be felt ! And though the I.D. was a matter of mystery, 40 O.B. was not even a matter of imagination. Yet to 40 O.B. may be traced, as I shall show, the salvation of the Allied cause from many threatened disasters, and to it and to our Naval Intelligence was owed the initiation of many of the most vital factors in the policy which made victory sure.

It is now admitted that some of the finest espionage work both before and during the War was carried out by Admiralty agents. The British Army and the Allies reaped considerable benefit from this. Just as our ships of war policed the seas and locked up the enemy fleet, so the secret service maintained its mastery of enemy communications, dogging their agents, tapping their wireless, and rendering abortive their attempts to break the world-silence that the silent service was determined from the start to impose upon the foe.

Germany has paid a generous tribute of regretful honour to our Navy and its intelligence officers. And, "lest we forget," I have penned this halting tribute of personally gleaned fact and anecdotage to the great organisation in which I was permitted for a while to play a small part.

CHAPTER II

AS soon as war was declared in August 1914, there were strange happenings in the deep waters which the vessels of the British Fleet rode. From the waves there slowly rose great snake-like monsters, thick with slime and seaweed growths, responding reluctantly to the grapnels which dragged them to the surface and beyond and laid their bulk athwart the deck of a boat, soon to be returned, severed and useless, to the depths. They were Germany's cables by which she maintained direct communication with the rest of the world.

Thus the British Navy struck the first blow at the enemy's war machinery. As far as telegraphs were concerned Germany was now isolated. She had two sources of communication left to her—cables via neutral countries, and wireless. Nor could she retaliate, and our British cables functioned throughout the War with very little hindrance.

But the ether was open to all the Powers. Into it all nations could discharge messages of the highest import. Equally important was the complicating factor that all nations might, if they wished, receive or stop these messages. We were all involved in the new problem of safeguarding our own information, of discovering and nullifying that of the enemy. It was not enough merely to prevent the latter from giving messages to its own forces and allies. It was

vital that we should receive those messages and turn them to our own purpose.

After the cutting of the enemy cables France suggested that we should jam Germany's wireless communications, but Britain more foresightedly disagreed with this policy of destruction and proposed to allow the enemy wireless to function with the deliberate intention of intercepting all messages. The wisdom of this plan was proved a thousandfold as the War progressed.

Obviously, though, none of the Powers would use the wireless for conveying vitally secret messages without disguising these as cunningly as possible. It was essential then that we should be able to read the enemy codes, constructed of the most baffling combinations of letters and numbers that the wit of man might devise. It was this necessity that led to the formation of a special department at the Admiralty, a department that in many ways may now be considered to have been the very hub of the mechanism of the Great War.

But it was not sufficient to create a department. Even more essential was the staffing of it. Clearly no ordinary type of mind and experience would afford the right qualities for its personnel. Deciphering is a special art which may, it is true, be developed by constant practice, but which must be accompanied by a flair for the work.

However, good fortune was with the Admiralty, for the very man to take charge was forthcoming—and was actually at the Admiralty at the time when the new department was mooted. This was Sir Alfred Ewing, a most distinguished scientist, who

was at the outbreak of war the Director of Naval Education (later, principal of Edinburgh University). The then Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiral Sir Henry Oliver, was aware that Sir Alfred Ewing had a big reputation as a solver of cryptics, of which he had made a lifelong hobby.

The story of his appointment was related to me when a few weeks later I entered on my own duties at the Admiralty. Admiral Oliver, fired by the coincidence of his need for a cryptographic expert and the hobby of Sir Alfred Ewing, decided to test his skill in all seriousness. He therefore handed him a few messages in code that had been intercepted from Germany. Great possibilities hung on the result, and Sir Alfred was equal to the task, for a few hours later the messages lay, properly deciphered, on Admiral Oliver's desk.

The Admiral looked at them and then turned to Ewing.

"Can you undertake the formation of a department to carry on this work?" he asked.

Ewing nodded. And in this wise was made one of the most suitable appointments that ever occurred in the Admiralty.

This small man with the enormous head, remarkable eyebrows, and strangely piercing eyes, was given a free hand, and soon organised a department which was destined to have the greatest significance in the progress of the War. He was more than a match for the creators of the codes employed by the German General Staff. While heavy and yet heavier guns were thundering on the Western Front, Ewing sat in his quiet room at the Admiralty, learning from the intercepted wireless what the enemy's next

move was to be in this game of "World Dominion or Downfall."

He never seemed in the least disturbed about the results from the Front, good, bad or indifferent. He was, he said, nothing more or less than "an official eavesdropper," and on his eavesdropping he concentrated all his best energies, contented in his supreme confidence that even if the Germans changed their code every hour of the day he had a staff of men who would be able to solve the puzzle. Towards the end of the War, indeed, his greatly increased staff included some of our best linguists—men who were thoroughly at home in the German vernacular—as well as expert cryptographers, photographers and chemists.

Such a staff was, of course, of the utmost value to any belligerent nation, and in the light of what has since been revealed it is abundantly evident that the staff of 40 O.B. more than held their own with that of other nations engaged in similar researches. If Ewing was a genius at deciphering codes, there were others who ran him close, and of one of these a high official said that he was worth a million pounds to our Government. His loss, he added, might even mean the loss of the War.

On one occasion when a baffling cipher message had been received one of the leading experts in this particular type of work was laid by on a bed of sickness. It was realised that the code had been changed, which indicated that the enemy was doubly anxious to maintain the strictest secrecy for a document of enormous State importance. No less than three specialists were called in to assist the recovery of the expert in question. And while still ill such was his

devotion to duty that he returned to his department and succeeded in a very short time in reducing the mysterious communication to a plain German text.

It was men of this calibre who played an important part in keeping the naval arm forewarned of enemy diplomacy and plans. Their work can never in the nature of things be adequately recognised, save by the few who were in the inner counsels of the Government and the High Command. Often to their own intimate circle of acquaintances they were only known as being "something at the Admiralty or the War Office," and they were frequently subjected to sneers as holders of "cushy jobs" or, worse than that, occupants of "funk-holes."

In a quiet wing of the Old Building of the Admiralty a home was found for this most secret of all War work, and there in Room 40, or 40 O.B. (Old Building) as it came to be called, Sir Alfred Ewing and his staff installed themselves. 40 O.B. was of the Intelligence Division but not in it. It was, in fact, situated nowhere near the offices allotted to the I.D., and very few knew of its existence at all. Even Cabinet Ministers knew next to nothing of this mysterious department, the high officials of the Admiralty were also in the dark, and the simple name 40 O.B. was adopted to avoid rousing any curiosity about it. But those whose work brought them into contact with the hidden activities of this essentially confidential office were of the opinion that 40 O.B. won the War.

Yet its existence was not made publicly known until a few years ago when Sir Alfred Ewing created a sensation by referring to it in a speech made at

Edinburgh University. Of it, too, the late Earl Balfour said :

“ To Room 40 the country owes an immense debt of gratitude—a debt which at the time, at least, could never be paid. Secrecy was of the very essence of the work, and never was secrecy more successfully observed.”

And how true that was ! When recently I met one of our most trusted naval officers who was at the Admiralty during the whole course of the War, he told me that he only learned of 40 O.B.'s existence some years after the Armistice. One officer, who worked in 40 O.B. following his release from a War hospital in early 1915 until the Armistice, carried his secret to the grave with him, and not very long ago his widow learned from me for the first time of the responsible work of her husband, whom she had understood to be doing some vague “ clerking job ” at the Admiralty.

Indeed, I myself, whose duties were altogether involved with the results of 40 O.B.'s operations, only entered that department on one occasion. My connection with it, like so many of the occupations of wartime, came about in a more or less accidental manner.

When Captain W. R. Hall, R.N. (later Admiral Sir Reginald Hall) became Director of Naval Intelligence in October 1914 in succession to Admiral Sir Henry Oliver, one of his first requirements was a confidential secretary. The primary qualifications were expert stenography, knowledge of the world, and absolute discretion. These constituted rather

a mixed bag which no one then employed at the Admiralty could proffer.

In the manner in which these things are done, it happened that Captain Hall spoke of his difficulty one day to Lord Denbigh at the Naval and Military Club. Lord Denbigh suggested myself, then his private secretary. As a sequel I received a telephone message the following morning to attend at once at the Admiralty to be interviewed by the Director of Naval Intelligence.

The latter's summary decision to appoint me was, I learned from subsequent experience, typical of the man. I do not remember ever hearing him express any pride in his remarkable gift for judging human character, but he certainly put complete reliance on this capacity. Walter Page, then American Ambassador, used to say that Hall could read any man's soul. At the Admiralty they used to say that he could read a man at a glance. I must admit that he spent half an hour over me! Many pertinent questions were asked me by Sir Oswyn Murray, Admiralty Secretary, before it was suggested that I should start to work right away. By the next morning I was installed. Incidentally, so certain was I at that time, as were most laymen then, that the War would be over by Christmas, that I pleasantly anticipated returning to the Earl of Denbigh in the New Year, and actually said "No" when asked if I wished my appointment to be permanent.

As my most important duty was to deal with the wireless communications after their decoding in 40 O.B. my life at the Admiralty proved a tremendously exciting period. The fate of nations was in that locked box which was brought to me daily by

our dear old naval messenger. I often wondered how much he suspected of the importance of its contents. He always spoke of 40 O.B. as "the dug-out," and thought it the "cushiest" department of the Admiralty because the staff seemed to have so much time "to spare for crossword puzzles!"

When Sir Alfred Ewing had quietly formed the nucleus of his staff of expert cryptographers—a staff that eventually numbered more than fifty—all of them with a knowledge of the German language, his next step was to provide several listening stations along the East Coast. From these all intercepted fleet signals and wireless communications were transmitted to the Admiralty. All transmissions of this sort were made, of course, in their original code.

When the department was properly developed these intercepts sometimes reached the remarkable total of about two thousand a day.

Not one of them ever completely defeated the code experts!

When deciphered these "intercepts" were put into a combination safe which only two people were able to open. Of course a great proportion of these messages were of no great importance or value to us. It was my business to sift the wheat from the chaff, but small in bulk though the wheat was it often proved to be of the most significant import.

Sometimes hundreds of communications came into my office for this sorting process, and after their reshuffling they would be sent on to the departments for which their contents made them the most suitable, this being decided at the discretion of the Director of Naval Intelligence. Of course, there was the closest co-ordination between the Naval and the

Military Intelligence Departments, and Scotland Yard was continually on the qui vive, both to provide the Army and Navy with any information which might be of value to them and to prevent the dissemination of facts or rumours which might be of assistance to the enemy or harmful to the national morale and so to the conduct of the War.

Our counter-espionage service was along with Room 40 O.B. one of the best-kept secrets of the War. The names of the Naval and Military chiefs were referred to by their initials, and even then in a whisper. They were in close touch with Scotland Yard from the moment war was declared, and worked in complete harmony with that department during the whole course of the War. The intercepts from 40 O.B. were, of course, of great assistance to all concerned, and upon many occasions we found that they confirmed reliable reports from Scotland Yard and our own Secret Service. Those items which bore on naval affairs were then dealt with by us, and the remainder of any importance would be sent to the Cabinet, War Office, Counter-Espionage Departments and Scotland Yard.

To the Cabinet chiefly matters of political importance were sent. Any information concerning spy-suspects was immediately conveyed to Sir Basil Thomson at Scotland Yard, which of course worked in collusion with us throughout.

And thus, briefly sketched, ran the formal routine—the affairs of offices and desks, safes and despatch-cases, stealthy comings and goings of trusted officials—which led to some of the biggest dramas of the War. Thus were disclosed stupendous secrets that set army corps marching to the attack, caused great

generals to alter their plans of battle, enabled our fleet to belch forth sudden death on to a surprised enemy, sealed, indeed, the future of the nations of the world.

My own first deep impression of the unparalleled importance of this department was at the time of the Dogger Bank action, when twenty-four hours in advance we knew the number of German ships that had left for the scene and the exact time of their departure—all, of course, transmitted to us in German cipher from the listening stations on the East Coast.

Naturally the Admiralty was often uneasy lest the Germans should discover that their wireless messages were being intercepted and decoded. The Germans, as a matter of fact, took the limit of precaution against this interference on our part, and at midnight every twenty-four hours they changed their codes. The amount of intensive research this threw on to the experts of 40 O.B. may be imagined.

Our chain of listening stations on the East Coast knew when to advise 40 O.B. of the alteration of cipher, for it was early discovered that the German signal of warning that the new code was to be put into operation consisted of a general signal of "Silence" from the enemy's wireless headquarters.

Enemy code-books from sunken German ships found their way to 40 O.B. early in the War, and these, which were luckily succeeded by similar captures in the course of time, proved of considerable assistance to the deciphering department. Suspecting this particular form of leakage, Germany tried to cover it, and in 1916 altered the key of their principal Naval Signal Book. But as they, ignorant of our interception of their wireless, broadcast this change



Exclusive News Agency

PRINCE RATIBOR
German Ambassador at Madrid.



Press Portrait Bureau

SIR ALFRED EWING
The "Official Eavesdropper" of "40 O.E."

to the High Seas Fleet one night at midnight, 40 O.B. was within a couple of hours once more in possession of the solution of the enemy's naval communications.

I think we were considerably helped in all these successful results of our eavesdropping by the fact that the Germans had built for themselves a legend of the stupidity of the British. But it is to one man in particular that 40 O.B. owes its ability to continue its work undiscovered throughout the War.

This was a young Frenchman, employed at the French Embassy in a neutral country. He was a man of intrepid coolness and poise who, though he was playing a dangerous game in which the slightest slip would have meant in all probability his death, never failed us and won through. His own country recognised his services handsomely, and the money he extracted from the Germans must have made him a fortune.

It is not generally known even to-day that many secret service agents disappeared mysteriously while carrying on their hazardous trade. Secret assassination was a method of disposal by no means unknown to the counter-espionage departments of some countries, and, if I might, I could tell stories stranger than spy-fiction has ever yet related of the happenings of that tragic time. But there is an Official Secrets Act—and one side of my memory is constantly occupied by forgetting !

Young Monsieur Z——'s method of procedure was daring and ingenious, and it was to a great extent of his own devising. Posing as a traitor who had no love for his own country and only desired to betray her for the best price he could obtain, he walked boldly one day into the German Embassy at Madrid.

There he succeeded in hoodwinking the officials into believing that he was employed at the Secret Service headquarters in Paris.

"I have no love for France," he declared. "My father is a German, and I wish to serve Germany."

His story, with the details he was able to give so as to colour it with truth, was so impressive that he was at once taken to Prince Ratibor, the German Ambassador. As the Germans had counted from the first on treachery and disunion among the Allies, and were in regular receipt of information from "hidden hands," this extra offer of assistance from a youth in a position to learn certain valuable secrets was likely to be welcomed. But the German Ambassador was not such a fool as to take on trust a self-confessed traitor. When the Frenchman was shown into him, Prince Ratibor's first question was :

"What proof can you give that you are able to sell us the secrets of which you speak?"

Fortunately, the spy had been well primed beforehand by the French Secret Service, and was able to mention a few items of minor importance which, all the same, were calculated to prove that only by being in a trusted capacity could he have obtained them.

"I tell you these things to show you that I can sell you secrets of the greatest military importance," added Z—. "But of course I must have my price."

Prince Ratibor finally agreed to pay the spy well for all the information he could supply. Having thus established an atmosphere of confidence about himself, Z— could carry on his main mission. This was to throw the Germans off the scent of our real source of information by making them believe

that some highly-placed person in Berlin was giving away their secrets. We aided and abetted him in this scheme by conveying to him at intervals certain confidential information that had come to us through 40 O.B. Such information was, of course, only of a nature we could afford to part with, but it sufficed, in giving him ostensible proof to pass on to the Germans that their secrets were being betrayed by some unknown person.

One of the tit-bits we passed on to the Frenchman for this purpose was the news of the dramatic departure of Sir Roger Casement from Berlin in order to head the Irish rebellion. Three days after Casement had sailed the Frenchman walked into the German Embassy at Madrid.

"I suppose you know that the secret of the intended Irish rebellion has leaked out?" he asked.

The Ambassador was astounded, for Berlin had believed this project to be one of its best-kept secrets. That it had become well enough known for a French traitor to learn about it caused great uneasiness.

"How do you know of this?" demanded Prince Ratibor. "Who is giving this away?"

"I do not know, but I believe it has come from someone in a high position at the German Admiralty," replied Z—. And to show the full extent of the supposed treachery he added that Paris was also in possession of the course of Casement's journey and the number of the U-boat that conveyed him.

As further details of the Allies' news-collecting were revealed to Potsdam the German General Staff made desperate efforts to run the arch-traitor to earth. Large sums were offered for information that

would lead to his capture, sums that were eventually increased until a fortune was the prize. But though at times the Germans seemed to nurse a suspicion of the truth, Z—— contrived to disarm them with such a wealth of resource and diplomatic lying that he remained an indispensable asset to the Allies and the slender reed on which the successful working of 40 O.B. rested.

One of the factors that helped to avert the German discovery of 40 O.B. as the fountain head of the British knowledge of their secret orders was that we made no attempt to disguise our use of directional wireless. This latter became of great importance for the purpose of discovering the source of any wireless signal. Stations were erected at Lowestoft, York, Murcar and Lerwick, which were in direct telegraphic communication with the Admiralty. Almost immediately after they had received a signal from any ship the position of the vessel would be charted in 40 O.B. This particular part of the Admiralty's job was indeed a masterpiece of efficiency.

As time went on the ramifications of the duties of 40 O.B. appeared to be multitudinous, for air messages referring to every aspect of wartime machinery were handled there. Most interesting and important were those from the Zeppelins and submarines, and of these 40 O.B. intercepted and deciphered vast numbers. The Zepps were fond of chattering on their way home, and we had no desire to discourage them—especially as it was rather amusing to learn what they thought they had accomplished in the light of what we actually knew. Veracity was certainly not their strong point, and even German H.Q. must

have become a little sceptical when they learned of the number of times that the Tower Bridge had been destroyed ! If they believed the Zeppelin reports the Germans must have rejoiced one night when they received the news—which we learned from their wireless—that more than half London had been blown up.

As a matter of fact, upon that occasion they had actually missed the House of Commons by a furlong or so. The House was sitting at the time, and I remember how, when he heard of the narrow shave next morning, Admiral Hall exclaimed :

“ What a pity ! ”

The submarines also gave details of their various exploits. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, for example, was wirelessed to Berlin on May 7th. Some of these messages were of little interest, but others when carefully examined revealed the position of the mine-fields and the composition of the German squadrons.

CHAPTER III

MUCH useful information was gathered from Germany's communications with her confidential agents in neutral countries. The majority of such messages were sent to Madrid, whence they were forwarded elsewhere, but there was also a stream of cipher messages to America, Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. The decoding of these was much facilitated by the fact that, whereas Germany daily changed her codes used for the fighting forces, this was not possible for her links in neutral countries.

It was through 40 O.B. that we made the greatest scoop of the War—the communication from Herr Zimmerman, the German Foreign Secretary, to Count Bernstorff, German Ambassador in Washington, that announced Germany's intention of beginning an unrestricted submarine campaign. The capture of this wireless, popularly known now as the Zimmerman message, was the direct means of bringing America into the conflict.

It was picked up in the ordinary way in code by the listening stations on the east coast and flashed immediately to the Admiralty along with other messages to be deciphered. The code experts got to work on it. Unaware of the importance of the document that had fallen into their hands they dealt with it in its turn as an item of routine.

Then began the dramatic spelling out of the fateful

news that changed the course of the War. There was at first some difficulty in discovering the German code. The first few words could not be deciphered, but bit by bit the cryptographers spelt out a sentence that staggered them by its terrific threat. It read :

WE PURPOSE TO BEGIN ON THE FIRST FEBRUARY
UNRESTRICTED SUBMARINE WARFARE. . . .

This was amid great excitement despatched at once to Admiral Hall, who, realising its gravity, hurried to 40 O.B. to await the deciphering of the complete message.

Still the experts could not find the key to the full code. Here was one of the greatest finds that they had ever made—and it could not be read ! Tension grew as the hours slipped by and still the cryptographers were wrestling with the problem. At last, after considerable trouble, they succeeded in piecing together the following disjointed sentences :

ZIMMERMAN TO BERNSTORFF FOR ECKHARDT.

W. 158.

Most secret for your Excellency's personal information and to be handed on to the Imperial Minister . . . Mexico with Tel. No. 1 . . . by a safe route. We purpose to begin on February 1st unrestricted submarine warfare. In doing so, however, we shall endeavour to keep America neutral. . . . If we should not . . . we propose . . . to . . . an alliance upon the following basis. . . .

. . . conduct of war. . . .

. . . conclusion of peace. . . .

. . . Your Excellency should for the present inform the President secretly . . . war with the

U.S.A. . . . Japan, and at the same time to negotiate between us and Japan . . . President . . . our submarines . . . will compel England to peace in a few months.

ZIMMERMAN.

Could anything be more exasperating than those baffling blanks? But at the third attempt the skill of the experts triumphed, and Germany's secret—the greatest since she struck the first blow of the War—was clear. It will be seen that imperfect understanding of the code led to many mistakes in the first deciphering.

The complete message now read :

ZIMMERMAN TO BERNSTORFF FOR ECKHARDT.

W. 158.

16th February, 1917.

We intend to begin on the 1st February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavour, in spite of this, to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding we shall make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: Make war together, make peace together, generous financial support, and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the President, that is, President Carranza of Mexico, of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain, and add the suggestion that he should on his own initiative invite Japan to immediate adherence, and at the same time mediate



Topical Press

THE LATE EARL BALFOUR AND MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL IN 1915



THE LATE PRESIDENT WILSON

Topical Press

between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace.

ZIMMERMAN.

In hot haste Admiral Hall sent this message to Lord Balfour. Swift action followed. The American Ambassador, Mr. Walter Page, was informed, and he at once flashed to President Wilson in cipher a copy of this communication.

There was at once the suggestion that the whole thing was a forgery. America suspected a hoax, for Washington could not imagine anything so incriminating being sent out broadcast by German wireless. We were requested to give them a copy of the code, so that they might read this and any other communications at their leisure. We pointed out that only a few experts could discover the key, and that their presence at the Admiralty was too precious to permit of their being sent across the Atlantic.

Finally we offered to show the key to the code if one of their highly confidential officials was sent to us. In due course Mr. Edward Bell, secretary of the Embassy in charge of Intelligence, arrived. In a short time he was able to decipher not only the Zimmerman wireless but hundreds of others.

Mr. Bell then informed President Wilson that he was perfectly satisfied as to the authenticity of this fateful communication from the German Foreign Secretary. Having received the key, the Americans were able to check the duplicated cable copy at Washington transmitted, of course, through our own

Atlantic service. Conclusive proof was forthcoming when it was discovered later that the German Ambassador in Washington was using the same cipher which 40 O.B. had decoded.

The secret of this code and of all other complicated and important ones used by the enemy was, and probably ever will be, kept by the staff of 40 O.B. For many reasons, past, present and future, it is imperative that they should not be disclosed. But of simpler forms used by ourselves the following which reached us from America shortly after the receipt by America of the Zimmerman cable, is an interesting example :

WASHINGTON. D.C.

President's embargo ruling should have immediate notice. Grave situation affecting international law. Statement foreshadows ruin of many neutrals. Yellow journals unifying national excitement immensely.

A skilfully written news item, it will be remarked, when its transcription is made by taking the initial letter of each word in order :

Pershing sails from N.Y. June 1.

Following upon this came the following :

Apparently neutrals' protest is thoroughly discounted and ignored. Isman hard hit. Blockade issue affects pretext for embargo on by-products, ejecting suets and vegetable oils.

This second message was to make doubly sure that there should be no misunderstanding of the first.

The clue in this case is the second letter of each word, again giving the solution :

Pershing sails from N.Y. June 1.

Should either of these communications have fallen into German hands, it was calculated that no suspicion of any underlying meaning was likely to be aroused by such very probable scraps of yellow journalism !

The wireless interception as practised by 40 O.B. was a serious business, but like most serious affairs was also not without its occasional humours. So brilliant was the staff-work of the cryptographers of this department that the Germans were after a while at their wits' end to make codes which would defy the more agile wits of Whitehall. However often and however drastically they changed their methods of radio communication, 40 O.B. was seldom an hour behind them in decoding the messages which emanated from Friedrichshafen, Bremershafen, Heligoland and other German bases.

On more than one occasion the laugh was certainly against the Boche, who was hoist by his own wireless petard in good earnest. I recall the joy at 40 O.B. when they decoded frenzied messages from the German skippers applying for instructions for reading and information concerning their latest and most elaborate code. They could not make it out.

But 40 O.B. had deciphered the new code without delay !

One of the most responsible tasks that was more or less indirectly involved with the work of the Naval Intelligence Division was that of crossing the Channel with despatches—a highly risky game in the early days of the War. Bertie Sullivan, nephew of the

famous composer, was appointed to this job, and as he was over age and unable to go to the Front he proved an excellent choice.

Some of these despatches were so important and "pink" that, I verily believe, rather than let them fall into the wrong hands Sullivan would have swallowed them ! His despatch-case was of course always loaded with lead in case of capture, but often he had to stow about his person other urgent papers entrusted to him at the last moment. However, all went well for some time, and he successfully carried on with his mission.

Then came the apparently inevitable day when his ship was torpedoed at last, and he found himself for many hours clinging to a raft in the waters of the Channel. A trying experience for a middle-aged man, and one not too robust at that ! Upon his return to London he insisted that his health was unaffected by the exposure and shock, but this gallant pretence was ruled out and he was ordered a long rest, after which he was given less precarious work to do at home.

While dining at his club one night he was approached by a friend who greeted him with :

" Not looking quite the thing, Bertie."

Sullivan explained, whereupon his friend suggested :

" I know the ideal thing for you. A pleasant coast voyage, as safe as anything can be these days, with the best of food and drink." And he dangled an enticing rest-cure before Sullivan's eyes. It certainly sounded ideal, for the club friend was in a position to know with some accuracy the movements of submarines and the boats whose course was practically free of them. The food attraction too was important,

and valuable for health reasons at a time when supplies were both scarce and bad on terra firma.

The well-meaning friend made an arrangement for Sullivan's cruise, and he sailed from Newcastle-on-Tyne. The ship had only been an hour out when she was torpedoed ! Sullivan was again saved and once more faced the elements—quite luxuriously, he said afterwards, since this time he had a little boat instead of a raft ! His rare sense of humour must, I think, have kept him alive, for in later days he enjoyed as a grim jest any suggestion from an acquaintance that, as he was not looking quite the thing, a sea voyage might be recommended !

I had on many occasions when Admiral Hall was ill to take precious documents to his house in Cranley Gardens, with the certain knowledge that the capture of those documents and their betrayal into German hands might have the most devastating effect on the country. But here again the organisation was so skilful that there could be no risks. The Admiralty safeguarded their messenger, and besides this personal protection they saw to it that the driver of the Admiralty car in which I carried the papers knew exactly what to do in case of any accident or emergency.

In the darkest hour of the War when admittedly the deciding factor was the matter of tonnage, Lord Pirie was invited to take up a post at the Admiralty, the advice of this great shipbuilder being anticipated to prove of prime importance at the time.

Incidentally, at least one Civil servant has cause to remember Lord Pirie's entering his new department. Lord Pirie had only been on the premises a couple of days when he strolled accidentally into an

office close to his own room and found this clerk smoking a cigarette with his feet on the mantelpiece.

"And what are you doing?" asked the ship-building expert.

"Nothing," said the surprised clerk offhandedly, not having the remotest idea of the questioner's identity.

"Very well," replied Lord Pirie. "You can do that outside."

The clerk was promptly removed to another part of the building.

It was recognised that Lord Pirie would be in a unique position to advise whether, by new constructions and repairs, the submarine havoc could be made good in time to turn the tide in our favour. Everyone was intensely anxious to learn his view of the situation. An acquaintance of mine was so interested that he did not stop short of eavesdropping, and one night determinedly took the next table at dinner in the St. James' Club in the hope of learning from the conversation at the neighbouring table where Lord Pirie sat some hint of his opinion. For two hours he listened patiently. At the end of that time he left in despair, his head reeling with talk of Minorcas, Wyandottes, Leghorns, Plymouth Rocks, etc.—but not a word touching on what the world was anxious to know. Lord Pirie's hobby was prize fowl!

Fortunately for all of us at the Admiralty in those depressing and long-drawn-out four years of war, we were blest with more than one cheery soul whose gay quips relieved many a dismal moment. Some of the chiefs were wont to look the picture of misery: others, happily, believed in wearing a pleasant expression and making the best of a bad job. But those dowered with a sense of humour were a godsend to

all of us. One of them (I will call him A——) will be gratefully remembered by many besides myself.

A—— was one of the secret staff of 40 O.B., and had to spend many a weary night struggling with the intricacies of that department. One morning, following one of these nights spent in disentangling a German intercept of which the code had obviously been changed, he came into my office and declared his dream of bliss at the moment was life in some lonely island in the Pacific.

"I want to do something that will liven me up, anyway," he said. Turning to a friend of his who was in the room he asked: "Anything doing on the Stock Exchange?"

"No," replied the friend.

"Anything in racing?"

"Ask Hoy," suggested the friend.

There happened to be a small jumping meeting that day, but as I had not yet seen a newspaper that morning I could not offer an opinion. However, A—— was bent on cheering himself up in his own way, and soon he had got dear old Maskell to bring in every single London paper.

We looked down the list of probable runners, and my suggestion was:

"Tiddlywinks"—this was not the horse's real name—"has a chance, though he has only one eye."

He then rang up a firm of bookmakers, gave my name as reference, the Admiralty as his address, and enquired about their limit. Then he called out his bet.

"I want £1,000,000 Tiddlywinks to win, and I think I'd better have half-a-million on for a place."

They must have nearly fainted! They pleaded that they could not accept such a bet.

"Then," said A—— quickly, "why do you advertise No Limit?"

And there his little joke might have ended but for his sudden curiosity to know who constituted the partnership of this firm of bookmakers who advertised "no limit." One of them, it transpired, had a German name. Realising his duty, A—— said the fellow ought to be interned at once, and before very long the German bookie found himself at Alexandra Palace.

And there, within a few weeks, the poor fellow died of pneumonia. All of which might never have happened but for his firm's misguided boosting of their "no limit" transactions.

A——'s mind appeared to run to jests in millions. One night at his club he made with a fellow-member a bet of a million that the latter was wrong on some point under discussion between them. A reference to Whittaker's Almanack proved that A—— had lost. At that time his bank account was about £50, certainly not more, on the right side, but A—— bravely wrote out his cheque for one million pounds, handed it to his friend, and remarked sadly :

"This means ruination to me and my family!"

The friend accepted the cheque with a smile and his thanks, and A—— felt that his joke had fallen rather flat. But the former had his own odd sense of humour, and promptly paid the million-pound cheque into his bank. When it arrived at A——'s bank for collection, the manager in a white heat of rage sent for his client to come and see him at once.

"You may think it very amusing to write out cheques for a million, when you have barely fifty," said the irate bank manager to the innocently-sur-

prised offender, "but it certainly is not funny. Your cheque has to go to the clearing-house, and you are giving a great deal of trouble to men who are working overtime."

A—— smiled blandly and answered :

"Really? The next cheque I write out shall be for ten million."

The attitude of the civilian population who had loved ones in the trenches or with the fleet towards those who had "cushy jobs" in Whitehall was often contemptuous. This is but natural, human nature being what it is.

But it did not add to one's pleasure or efficiency to realise that one was under the critical scrutiny of every woman or elderly man when one rode in bus or Tube or walked the streets. Gold-braided, green-tabbed or brass-hatted men in uniform, many of whom had opportunities of avoiding the perpetual strain of war-time London, got away with it. Those of us who wore no uniform—and many valued and lion-hearted agents were among the company—had to grin and bear it. Or, at any rate, bear it !

As a matter of fact, life was for many of us a long-drawn strain. My own work, though I enjoyed it enormously—and enjoy it still more in retrospect—was extremely exacting. Long hours and heavy responsibility were only the beginning. Later came the added exactions upon our nervous energy of the air raids, and the knowledge that Whitehall was one of the invader's most desirable targets. I rather think that the Zepp commander who had scored a direct hit on the Old Building would have been assured of the Iron Cross with bar—not to mention the freedom of all the bars in Berlin !

But looking back on those stirring times, I should say that what took the biggest toll of us who were privileged to glimpse the inner secrets of a world at war was the very fact that we were to some extent in the secret. It was not so much that we were in a position of trust. One schooled oneself easily to discretion. And anyhow, the machinery of the Intelligence Division was so delicately and perfectly appointed that a single individual, if he were not the blackest-hearted of traitors, could not very well throw sand into the bearings to any fatal extent.

All the same, there is probably no more trying experience in the world than to maintain not merely secrecy but the appearance of cheerful indifference when one is the recipient of grave news. I speak now of more than personal news—of news which the whole of one's world dreads, or good tidings for which all one's fellow-men are waiting eagerly.

In the course of a chequered life I had been in many exciting situations. While in South Africa I knew the alarums and excursions of war. And I have got out of many a tight corner without feeling the pinch. But that "cushy job" at the Admiralty was certainly the most mentally trying and physically exhausting experience that I ever had.

I found that I was by no means alone in this. Hardened sea-dogs who would face death without a spare thought for anything but duty have confessed that war-time London "put them through the hoops." One veteran remarked to me in the middle of one of our trying times :

"I wish to God I could swap places with myself in any of the toughest scraps I've ever been in!"

I comforted him with a cup of tea and an exchange

of racing chat, which he later confessed took "a hell of a load" off his mind.

Of course we were the first to know of disaster. And disasters which in peace-time would be accounted terrible are the routine of war. "There is nothing to report," that confident communiqué, means more or less what it says to the ordinary newspaper reader. To those in the know, it means merely that the wastage of life and the output of daring and devotion go on without any devastating rise in the curve of tragedy.

There were times, however, when these sudden rises occurred and when we waited, waited, to see what would happen next. Would our well-laid schemes check the enemy? Would an ingenious defence prove trusty under the incalculable strains of battle? Was a certain scrap of information reliable, or was it the clever fabrication of those brilliant enemy brains pitted against the best brains of our own people?

I well remember a certain British agent who happened to be in my company when the news came through of the execution of another agent against whom he had operated. He had known the enemy agent well. They had swapped drinks and gossip. That sort of thing was all in the day's march with such men. Now one good fellow was buried, riddled with the bullets of a firing party, and my companion was safe—for the time being.

"Poor old T——," he said. Then, more cheerfully: "Well, anyhow, he's done his shift. Lucky devil!"

But he went out on his perilous trade with unabated enthusiasm a few days after.

CHAPTER IV

NEVER have I seen a man of such uncommanding size convey such a commanding impression as did Admiral Hall. Almost bald, with a shrewd penetrating glance and a quick mode of speech entirely in keeping with his temperament, he produced an almost terrorising effect on suspects and culprits with whom he had to deal. Few could get past that challenging expression of his.

But whatever finger he might have in the fate of men, there were few who did not like and admire as well as respect him. Among his colleagues and subordinates he was immensely popular, as are most people of strong personality. I remember how in one instance in which a suspected spy left the Admiral's room feeling fairly certain that the interview had sealed his doom, the man remarked to me :

" I like that little man. I suppose he means what he says ? "

" Always," I replied.

" Well, I like him."

Admiral Hall's keen powers of observation were directed towards every detail of his daily round. Nothing escaped his alert eye and vivid mind, and his quick grasp of every situation thwarted the enemy plans time and again. One important instance looms in my memory.

Six big liners were due to come through the North

Channel between the north of Ireland and the south of Scotland. All the usual precautions for their safety were held to be complete, when a startling wireless message was intercepted by 40 O.B. It was being sent out by the German Admiralty to two of their submarines, and when decoded was revealed as a skilfully detailed order for the submarines to waylay the ships.

Admiral Hall unhesitatingly made his decision. It proved a brilliant piece of strategy.

He immediately ordered the liners to clear out to sea and remain there waiting further instructions. They did so. At once the enemy submarines headed for the Bristol Channel, surmising that their coveted prize had changed its route and gone by the west coast. The ruse had succeeded exactly as Hall had foreseen. The next morning he directed the liners to proceed through the North Channel as before and make for Liverpool, where they arrived quite safely. And the general public knew nothing of the colossal tragedy averted by the expert work of 40 O.B., combined with the swift and sure action of the D.N.I.

At one time the Cabinet was greatly perturbed by the insistent reports about leakages through the medium of the ordinary mails. It appeared that vital secrets were finding their way to Germany via the mail-service from this country to Holland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Something had to be done, and done speedily, but the most elaborate plans that were put forward for tackling this desperately difficult matter had holes in them somewhere or other. Admiral Hall found his own solution. It was both drastically simple and amusing.

He telephoned to the Postmaster-General :

“ Hold up all mails and await further instructions.”

A few days passed but no “ further instructions ” reached Lord Illingworth. He became uneasy and reported that the correspondence had accumulated and was getting “ mountains high.” Still no instructions. He reported again. There was no further room at Mount Pleasant, and what on earth was he to do ?

“ Very well,” replied the Admiral. “ I’ll soon relieve you.”

By the next day he had found an empty building at Westminster and had put a number of Jack-tars on to the task of helping to remove the bags of mails from Mount Pleasant to this new storage.

“ And what are you going to do with them now ? ” the Postmaster-General enquired curiously.

“ Don’t you think they would make a good bonfire ? ” the D.N.I. replied.

Anyhow, there were no leakages through those mails !

Soon after his appointment, it was necessary for Admiral Hall to see the French Naval Attaché, who came to his room at the Admiralty. Though Hall appeared to be completely absorbed in the matter under discussion with the attaché, his keenly observant eye registered various points about the latter, one of which was a continual wandering of the Frenchman’s eye to the wall behind Hall’s head. The moment his visitor had gone the D.N.I. turned round and himself looked at the wall. He saw hanging there a large steel engraving of the Battle of Waterloo.

An R.N.V.R. officer, a stockbroker by profession,

had won the picture in a Stock Exchange raffle, and from kindly motives of brightening up the D.N.I.'s office had presented it to the room. Hall took one glance at this well-known picture of our former triumph over the French, saw in his mind's eye the Entente Cordiale shattered into a thousand pieces, and ejaculated :

“ Take the damned thing away at once ! ”

Thereafter it hung over the desk in my office, a discreet consideration of the national feelings of any future visitors to the D.N.I. and a tactful compromise with those of its well-meaning donor.

This small incident caused Hall to look round his walls, from which he got a jar to his own patriotic sense, for on one of them was a chart, marked *official*, of the “ German Ocean.” He asked me if I had ever heard of it. I said that as a school boy I had learned to call it the “ North Sea.”

“ Good,” he replied. “ It shall be the North Sea.”

He promptly touched the bell under his desk and ordered a brush and some black and blue ink. In five minutes the German Ocean was the North Sea.

Admiral Hall had a marvellous gift for relieving times of strain or over-concentration with a sudden joke, and he generally produced the effect he so understandingly intended.

One of his little quips went further than he foresaw, however.

Towards the end of the War, when both individuals and the nation were terribly war-weary, the late H. B. Irving became attached to the Intelligence Department. One day soon afterwards, Admiral Hall left the office, telling me that Mr. Irving was now Director of Naval Intelligence, and pointed to the

latter who with great dignity seated himself in the D.N.I.'s chair.

A naval messenger brought to my room as usual the sealed box from 40 O.B. containing the new batch of intercepted German wireless messages. I scrutinised them and discovered nothing of importance in them. Then I walked into the D.N.I.'s office and handed the lot to the "new" director. Mr. Irving, who was very friendly with "Blinker" (Admiral Hall), suddenly felt that in assuming his position and being faced with these wires as a part of routine, he was dealing with a grave responsibility. He came to me later and asked me if I could find anything important in them, and was seriously relieved when I said "No."

Then there was a fearful row in the department. One noble lord of the R.N.V.R. nearly went through the roof with consternation at my indiscretion in letting Irving see these telegrams. My defence was the simple statement that Admiral Hall had informed me before leaving that Irving was the D.N.I. during his absence, and that my action in placing the telegrams before him was merely carrying out instructions.

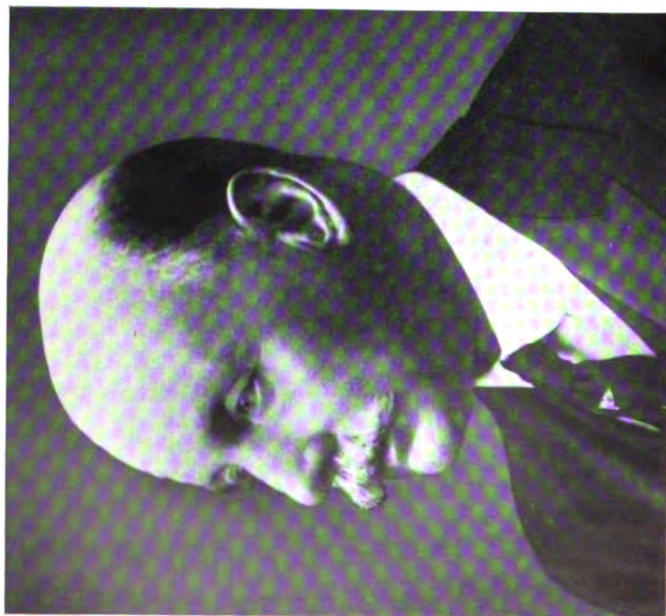
It was a storm in a teacup, and the Admiral got a great deal of pleasure out of it when it was related to him on his return. There was for the first time for many a long day a care-free ring in our laughter, for we knew by then that the end of the War was in sight.

It was consistent with the rest of Admiral Hall's personality that his likes and dislikes both—and his sentiment held very few half-way measures—were strong. He could be a good friend or an implacable enemy. He was adored by his men in the Navy, with



LADY DOROTHY FEILDING

Who won wide fame for her ambulance work at the Front, and received British and Belgian decorations in recognition of her bravery.



Press Portrait Bureau

THE LATE LORD LONG
First Lord of the Admiralty, 1919.



Press Portrait Bureau

EARL OF DENBIGH
Colonel of H.A.C.

whom his lightest word went further than the stern commands of many others.

In the personnel of H.M.S. *Queen Mary* he took a great interest. When the men went ashore he would ask them to enjoy themselves, but, like decent fellows, not to take too much to drink—and the kindliness of his request was far more effective than rigid discipline would have been.

One of his stokers fell into a dry-dock at Devonport and was seriously injured. In hospital it was found that the man's skull had been badly fractured, and as the doctors were of the opinion that he would only last a day or so at most he was reported to the Admiral as being *in extremis*. The latter, deeply concerned, went up to the hospital, but the nurse refused to allow him to see the patient, who was unconscious. Admiral Hall, however, persisted, and having pointed out to the medical superintendent that, as the man could not possibly recover, his seeing him could do no great harm, he was admitted to the bedside.

As the Admiral looked down at the bandaged head and ghastly face of the dying man, the latter slowly opened his eyes, stared at him blankly for a few moments, and then with the light of recognition dawning, said :

“ Oh, it's you, you blighter, is it ? ! ! ”

And turning over, the stoker went comfortably to sleep and defied all medical opinion by making a speedy recovery.

One of the D.N.I.'s greatest attachments was to the Denbigh family, whom he greatly admired and whom he counted among his best friends. He was, I think, distantly related to the Countess of Denbigh, for whom he had the greatest respect. Like himself,

she was a super-patriot and out to win the War at any personal cost. And indeed, the War cost her dear.

Lord Denbigh, the Colonel of the H.A.C., though advanced in years at the outbreak of war, went immediately to the Front. Her eldest son, Viscount Feilding, and the Hon. Henry Feilding were serving in France, the Hon. Hugh Feilding was aboard *Defence*, Lady Dorothie Feilding was running her own ambulance in Belgium, and all the other members of the family were engaged in some or other form of war work. Soon Lady Denbigh had her full share of sorrows.

First came the news of the loss of the Hon. Hugh in the sinking of *Defence* at the Battle of Jutland. I well remember how Lady Denbigh, having called at the Admiralty in the vain hope of the intelligence being contradicted, set her teeth in an effort at composure as she re-entered her car. With her was the Hon. Henry Feilding, home on leave from his safe job as A.D.C. at the Front. By his request the car was stopped at Wellington Barracks, where he quickly arranged a transfer for himself into the trenches, eager to avenge the death of his brother. It was but a few days before his name appeared in the casualty list ; he was mortally wounded.

"I'd rather see grass than Germans!" Lady Denbigh said once in my hearing when I was still at Newnham Paddox at the beginning of the War, and the gardener, having been told to dismiss most of his assistants, complained that the grass would soon be growing all over the paths. And soon she had turned the huge mansion into a hospital for wounded soldiers, working there herself about twenty hours out of every twenty-four. She never recovered from the

effects of the overstrain on her health, and hers was another life sacrificed for England.

One day after Captain Moore and Lady Dorothie Feilding, later Lady Dorothie Moore, had called at the Admiralty to see the D.N.I., the latter beckoned me to look from the window at the two—Captain Moore about six-foot-six of fine manhood—as they crossed the parade.

“Look!” he exclaimed. “Look at that pair. How the hell can we lose the War!”

The D.N.I. was a man of quick action, and one who expected implicit obedience even to his most impulsive orders. Many of them were amusing. On one occasion after the Admiralty had cut down our coal supply the Admiral was feeling pretty chilly in his now half-warmed room. He bore it for a time, and then rang for Maskell and pointed to the fire. Maskell hesitated for a moment, since the Admiral pretended to be absorbed in his papers, but finally interrupted him to show him the new order concerning fuel.

“Yes, yes!” said Admiral Hall, and looked through the window. Luck was with him, for he spotted a coal-cart. “Maskell, that’s wanted here,” he declared.

All that Maskell replied was, “Yes, sir.”

I have no idea to whom the coal belonged originally, but Maskell soon got possession of it. When he returned to the room to replenish the fire with his prize the Admiral said casually :

“You see, Maskell, Hoy is used to South Africa and cannot stand this climate. If we lose him we lose the War!”

And Maskell replied again simply : “Yes, sir.”

At another time, Lady Dorothe Feilding arrived at the Admiralty in her car, the petrol supply giving out just as she pulled up. Petrol restrictions were then in full force. At the conclusion of his conference with his visitor Admiral Hall summoned his naval messenger.

"Maskell, steal petrol," he commanded.

"Yes, sir," responded Maskell, and ten minutes later I saw the car being driven away in good order.

From the above it will be gathered that the gentle art of scrounging was not confined to the junior service. In the science of producing something from nothing, indeed, Maskelyne had nothing on Maskell !

Mr. H. W. Wilson was responsible for the following, an amusing impression of Admiral Hall as we all knew him, which came my way while employed at the Admiralty.¹

My name is Captain Hall,
 Damn your eyes ;
 They call me "Blinker " Hall,
 Damn their eyes.
 My name is Captain Hall,
 I adore you one and all,
 Damn your eyes,
 Damn your eyes—
 Have some baccy !

I know each new U-boat,
 Damn your eyes ;
 And every mine afloat,
 Damn its eyes.
 And I almost get a blink on
 Your old friend Trebitsch Lincoln,
 Damn his eyes,
 Damn his eyes—
 Happy days !

This "poem" appeared in certain newspapers, and is also published in Admiral Brownrigg's admirable book on the naval censorship.

They say I stuffed the Press,
 Damn their eyes ;
 'Twas the gospel, more or less,
 Damn their eyes ;
 'Struth, I hardly said a word,
 It was Wilson that you heard,
 Damn his eyes,
 Damn his eyes—
 Have a submarine !

And Sir Douglas he did come,
 Damn his eyes ;
 Sir Douglas he *would* come,
 Damn his eyes ;
 And he looked so very glum
 As he censored out each plum,
 Damn his eyes,
 Damn his eyes—
 Have a blue pencil !

And now in peace I dwell,
 Damn your eyes ;
 Though there isn't much to tell,
 Damn your eyes,
 There's a lot of things to mind
 In the time we've left behind,
 Damn your eyes,
 Damn your eyes—
 For the duration of Peace.

The subtle brain and extensive worldly wisdom of the Chief of the Intelligence Division were ever at the service of his country and the Allies to outwit the enemy and to

“ Confound their politics,
 Frustrate their knavish tricks.”

The following story, quoted from Major Thomas Coulson's biography of Mata Hari,¹ is, as that author remarks, “ too good to omit.”

“ In England, as in Germany,” writes Major

¹ *Mata Hari, Courtesan and Spy*. Major Thomas Coulson (Hutchinson).

Coulson, "the Intelligence services of the Army and the Navy are separate departments, only, whereas in Germany the two services fought each other with the dogged perseverance of the proverbial Kilkenny cats, their opposite numbers in London contrived to work with commendable co-operation, except in this one case. Sir Reginald Hall, the exceedingly astute head of the Admiralty Intelligence Service, once ran across an enemy agent who seemed a likely fellow to snatch greedily at any morsel of confidential information. At this time Sir Reginald wanted very badly to have the enemy misconstrue the meaning of a naval concentration which was in contemplation, so he allowed the watchful spy to receive, in strict confidence, the knowledge that the ships were collecting in order to cover a landing of troops somewhere between the Ems and the Weser.

"This threatened violation of their territory came to the ears of the Dutch statesmen, who had to be gently pacified. It also arrived at the imperial headquarters, where it created general alarm. Several reserve divisions were immediately detached from their formations and were moved to meet the menace. Sure enough, this movement of troops was observed and reported upon by the zealous agents, only in this case the reports went to the War Office and not to the Admiralty.

"British military strategists submitted the problem to careful examination, and decided that it indicated an intention on the part of the Germans to undertake an invasion of the south coast. They speedily drew up a plan of defence, and invited

the co-operation of the Admiralty in opposing this threat to the safety of the realm. Inquiries on the matter were naturally addressed to Hall by his superiors, and he had to admit that his little plot to deceive the enemy had also succeeded in confusing his friends at the War Office."

Amongst our most important captures during the War was that of Commander von Rintelen. This German gentleman had started business in Mexico and achieved a position of considerable influence in Central America. From the United States we received information that von Rintelen was a German naval officer, retired, and that he was travelling from America to Germany under an assumed name.

When his ship reached Southampton a Scotland Yard detective appeared on the scene, found von Rintelen in his stateroom with a well-known West End actress with whom he had become very friendly on the voyage, and arrested him. He was brought before Admiral Hall at the Admiralty.

A dramatic scene ensued. The D.N.I. hoped that some information of use to us might be obtained from the interview, and he treated the German with every courtesy. But von Rintelen was not to be drawn. He refused to admit having any connection with the German Navy, though under pressure of questions he declared that he had been an army reservist. Admiral Hall disbelieved this statement, but as the officer stuck to it he tried him on another tack, the matter of hostilities. Again von Rintelen eluded him by cleverly confining himself to sweeping generalisations, the general tenor of which was :

" You made a mistake in having an alliance with

France. Your natural alliance was with Germany, and Great Britain and Germany could have policed the world."

The Director of Naval Intelligence was dissatisfied with the results of this first interview, and a further examination at Scotland Yard was arranged, at which the late Lord Abinger, who spoke perfect German, and myself were present. The cross-examination was barely under way when Lord Abinger suddenly snapped out in German :

" Salute ! "

Von Rintelen automatically responded by clicking his heels together and giving the naval salute ! He was outwitted. The iron tradition of his Service had been too much for him.

When he saw that his identity was established, he became more communicative, but in the course of the conversation that followed nothing was gained from him that was of any real importance from our point of view. He was then interned at Donnington Hall, the great centre for German prisoners of any distinction.

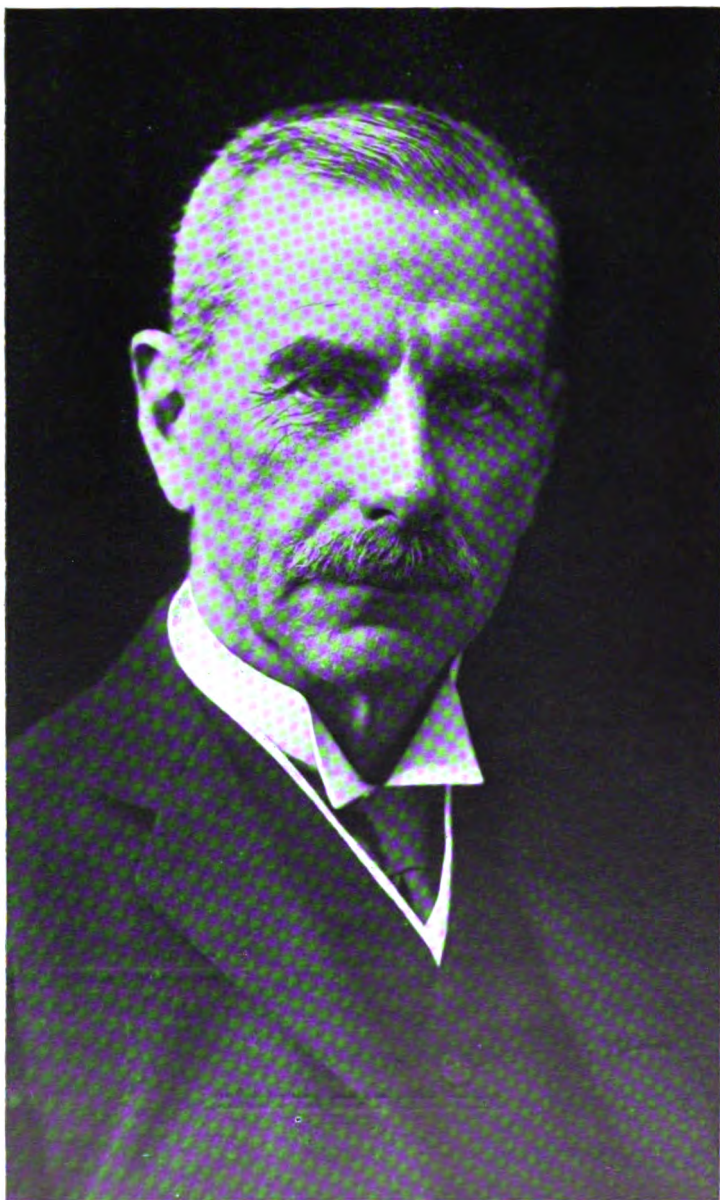
But this was not the end of our responsibility for von Rintelen. One Sunday morning a telegram arrived for the Director of Naval Intelligence, in whose absence I myself opened it, and found it to contain the announcement that von Rintelen had escaped from Donnington Hall. I showed this to a peer who was in friendly co-operation with Admiral Hall, and asked him to give it to the latter when he arrived.

I remember the twinkle in the noble lord's eye as he hastily put the paper back into my hand and left me to face the music, saying :



General Photographic Agency

SCOTLAND YARD AT NIGHT



Press Portrait Bureau

SIR BASIL THOMSON
Scotland Yard's Chief during the War.

"Not on your life, Hoy! Tell him yourself!"

When the Admiral arrived and asked if there was any news of importance—his question implying, as usual, from the telegrams intercepted by 40 O.B.—I said: "Nothing." Then I added: "Except this," and handed him the wire.

He read it thoughtfully and, I must say, without the explosion the peer had anticipated. Then he went to the telephone and gave orders for all trains to be examined at their next stations, and for all outgoing ships to be stopped until given the word of release.

A few hours later I was able to hand him another telegram which announced that von Rintelen had been captured at Leicester.

The Admiral rubbed his hands together gleefully and said:

"Now I'll put the —— where he can't get away."

We had no further trouble with the German officer after this. Admiral Hall's action in stopping trains and outgoing vessels had proved to him the practical impossibility of escape from Great Britain.

There was, by the way, an amusing sequel to this strategy of the D.N.I.'s—amusing at this distance of time, at any rate, though possibly somewhat trying at the time for those it involved. As soon as the prisoner was found at Leicester, all trains were allowed to resume their journeys. But two days later there came a message from Scapa Flow asking how much longer Admiral Hall wished to hold up the neutral ships that were heavily congesting our ports. The Admiral sent a prompt reply:

"You can let them go!"

He had forgotten to cancel his order to stop all

ships from leaving port ! He offered no explanation, letting the incident fade out under some such principle, probably, as that put into words in one of the slogans of Lord Fisher : " Never explain and never apologise."

This was almost the only instance of forgetfulness on the part of the Director of Naval Intelligence that I ever noticed, and it was, after all, a comparative trifle among the events of the World War.

Admiral Hall's quick decisiveness amounted at times to impulsiveness. It was a temperamental quality of his which would, I suspect, have led him, if the power had lain in his hands, into passing sentence of death without any hesitation on all the hireling spies who came before him. And they would probably have left this world of sorrows without so much as time to say their prayers !

Sir Basil Thomson, on the other hand, was much cooler. He assumed always—and more especially in the case of those who had suddenly arrived in England—that there might be a whole nest of them. He therefore fenced with them. His manner was charming, quiet and sympathetic, and no one could extract so much information as Sir Basil did with such apparent guilelessness. When it was clear to him that no more was to be learned by further investigation, then it lay with the authorities to decide upon internment or the Tower of London.

Sir Basil had a rare sense of humour. Once a British suspect, a woman, appeared before him and lost her temper as he continued his persistently gentle questioning.

" I think we have met before," she snapped.

" Yes, madam," Sir Basil replied quietly. " I

think in the same establishment too (he had been Governor of Dartmoor Prison). But there was the small difference that I could have gone out, whereas you couldn't."

Indeed, Sir Basil Thomson and Sir Reginald Hall in their several ways made an ideal balance, which was all to the good for the task to which they were both devoted. The Admiral's impetuosity and the cool reason of the great police chief assured at once that both sides of a case were fully investigated. The combination, while meting out stern justice, tempered this with mercy and also useful expediency.

CHAPTER V

MY first experience of Lord Fisher was a sufficiently impressive one. A few days after my arrival at the Admiralty it happened that a number of R.N.V.R. officers, some of whom were peers of the realm and all of whom were men with a lifelong tradition of wielding authority, were closeted in Admiral Hall's room discussing affairs. Suddenly the door opened ever so little, and "Jacky" put his head round it. And what a head!

Curiously enough, for all that he was one of the most remarkable figures in English life of this century, only one artist seems to have captured anything fundamental about "Jacky" Fisher. That artist is Jacob Epstein, whose bust of the Admiral ranks to my mind among the most vivid commentaries on one of the most remarkable Englishmen of all time. Epstein has hit off the dominance and certainty of the man—his genius for command and his jaunty self-assurance.

Admiral Beatty in the flesh has just that touch of God-damn-ery that Epstein's sculpture so justly ascribes to Fisher. After all, they are men of similar kidney—fine leaders, with all the assurance of three hundred years of a victorious naval tradition behind them.

But even Epstein's masterpiece of Fisher—with its look of wisdom and price, rather like that of an old Chinese aristocrat—fails to convey the homeliness

and humour that everyone who knew the Admiral recognised to be important traits of his character and appearance. And though the Jewish artist has captured his resolution, he does not suggest a tithe of the remorselessness of his unusual personality.

One glance at that seamed, wicked-looking face with its bloodshot eyes might well be enough for any man. I knew his photographed countenance, as did most of the world at that time, as intimately as I did my own mirrored reflection, but it was the face of a Raphael cherub as compared with the flesh-blood-and-iron visage that looked round that door.

Every man in the room remained rigid in his pose. We might have been playing that ridiculous little game associated with children's Christmas parties! Fisher's bloodshot eyes swept over the group, looked at and through everyone there. Then he yelled :

" Hall ! I want that man at three o'clock."

The Admiral jumped to attention, saluted and replied :

" Yes, sir. Dead or alive."

" Alive ! " shouted Fisher, as if he were bellowing in the North Sea.

With the same characteristic vehemence he withdrew his head, and when the door had closed the officers were literally shaking like blancmange. I never heard the identity of the man he required, but when I thought of the possibility of his not being produced at three o'clock sharp a vision of the Tower of London flitted through my mind ! And I saw men dangling at yard-arms !

Afterwards I met Lord Fisher on several occasions when he needed me because he had to dictate something of the greatest secrecy—what we called " pink."

I never saw him in uniform, and very often he would carry an umbrella which he invariably gripped in the centre. He rather disconcerted the Admiralty staff by failing to return their salutes, though the reason for this was no doubt the fact that he walked with his head down, completely absorbed in thought.

On one occasion he sent a Greek down to me with instructions to prepare certain papers. I managed to prepare the necessary documents, though it was somewhat difficult to do as the Greek's English was rocky and some of his meaning had to be guessed at. The Greek carried the papers off to Lord Fisher in great delight at the success of his English, or at my interpretation of it, and promptly arranged with him that I should accompany him to Tenedos on a special mission.

This was the purchase of a number of ships in which, via the Imperial Ottoman Bank, about a million pounds was to be spent, and was naturally a matter of vital import to the First Sea Lord. But as I realised that my abrupt departure within the day or two commanded by Fisher was likely to cause considerable inconvenience in my own department, I sounded the staff as to what I could do to get out of it. They told me that anyone who dared to refuse Lord Fisher's request would be very severely dealt with. In the face of that, I much appreciated Admiral Hall's response when I told him of the arrangement.

"I'll cut his b—— throat if he takes you away," he said.

Lord Fisher was eminently a man of quick decisions and forthright methods. I was never more impressed by these qualities of his than I was when

I saw them put into action in a matter pertaining to his own family.

When the War broke out, Lord Fisher's daughter, Mrs. Neeld, and Rear-Admiral Neeld, her husband, were both in Germany taking a cure. As soon as Admiral Fisher got into harness he took determined steps to secure their release from Germany. He sent a long wire to Admiral Tirpitz first of all, a message written out in plain—very plain!—English, a feature that rather surprised me until I realised that they were, until hostilities separated them, very great friends. He strengthened this demand for his daughter's return home by a simultaneous appeal to President Wilson, couched in anything but polite terms, and to the Kaiser's brother, Prince Henry of Prussia.

Now Prince Henry of Prussia was no stranger to Lord Fisher, and had a great respect both for the man and for the naval power he controlled. Prince Henry had quite recently returned from a world tour, and had given the Kaiser a brief outline of observations he had made which he knew would interest the Emperor, who was at that time obsessed with his ambitions for his own Navy. The outstanding features of the trip, he said, had been a Union Jack at Gibraltar, a Union Jack at Malta, a Union Jack at Bombay, a Union Jack at Cape Town, at Falkland, and so on and so on.

"Indeed," he concluded, "nothing but damned Union Jacks all the way!"

Whatever the feelings may have been of the recipients of Lord Fisher's cables, his compelling influence carried its weight, and Admiral and Mrs. Neeld were almost immediately released and allowed to return to England.

Admiral Fisher's obstinacy sometimes amounted to idiosyncrasy, and no case in point stands out in my memory so strongly as the matter of the battleship *Audacious*.

Audacious was struck by a German mine off the coast of Donegal on October 27th, 1914. She sank with remarkable slowness, and this fact gave ample opportunity to several American voyagers who passed her on their way home to take photographs of the maimed battleship at various stages of her submersion. These photographs soon appeared in the American papers, and in due course copies of them reached our Press Bureau.

Then followed a secret struggle among the authorities concerned about the wisest line to take in the matter of announcing this loss. Mr. Winston Churchill would have announced the loss of *Audacious* in the House of Commons without delay. The Commander-in-Chief, Viscount Jellicoe, was in favour of suppressing the news of this disaster for a little while ; his grounds for this policy were quite reasonable, for our margin of naval superiority was then dangerously small (the High Seas Fleet possessed eighty-eight destroyers to our forty-two), and it was well that Germany should be kept in ignorance of its reduction. But "Jacky" was adamant : there must be *no* admission that we had lost *Audacious*.

Lord Fisher won. He was not in the best of tempers at this time, and being temperamentally disinclined either to admit or to apologise for any errors of judgment on his own part refused to see that he was placing the Admiralty in a peculiarly awkward position.

On the one hand, the suppression of the news of



Topical Press

THE SINKING OF H.M.S. AUDACIOUS, OFF THE NORTH IRISH COAST ON OCTOBER 27TH, 1914

All mention of the incident was rigorously suppressed at the time. This photograph was taken from a passing liner, whose officers chased the passengers below and confiscated all the cameras they could find. This picture was taken surreptitiously through a porthole.



General Photographic Agency

ADMIRAL VON SCHEER

the loss of *Audacious* tended to leave our Allies with the impression that we were first-class liars whose communiqués were not to be trusted. Our own Press began to suspect us too, and the portion of the general public who had learned some of the facts concerning the battleship were wondering whether any future news issues of ours could be believed.

On the other hand, and in support of Fisher's decision, there was much to be said for leaving the German Naval Staff guessing. These were early days to risk buoying up their self-confidence and to imperil our own morale the while.

However, as we know, Fisher won his point, and a means had to be devised to lull Germany's suspicions about *Audacious*. The tactics we adopted were the bruited in Germany of a rumour that the battleship had been salvaged by Messrs. Harland and Wolff, the Belfast shipbuilding firm, that the rivetters were working on her day and night, and that within a short time she would resume her place with the Grand Fleet. This scheme was more successful than seemed likely at the time, for the Germans believed the story and always counted *Audacious* as a "live" member of the fleet to be taken into account in anticipating any future naval engagement.

To this strange pertinacity of the First Sea Lord's in ordering us to take the official attitude that the vessel was not sunk we owe the rather eerie inclusion of her name in the Navy List until the end of the War! But if this jealously-guarded book had come into the hands of one of Germany's secret agents he would have noted that there was no personnel attached to the name *Audacious* over this long period.

The official announcement of the battleship's loss

was made four years after she sank off the coast of Donegal !

At the end of October 1914, when Lord Fisher took over from Prince Louis of Battenberg, an important item of naval news had to be handled by the Censor, and there was every necessity for quick decision as to the wisdom or otherwise of publishing all the facts. This was the tragic disaster off Coronel where Admiral von Spee met the British South American fleet, giving us a serious set-back through the loss of Admiral Cradock and hundreds of officers and men.

Lord Fisher was badly shaken by this event. The news cast an unspeakable gloom over the Admiralty ; it was an unexpected blow. It was decided in the first place not to take the general public into our confidence, and rapid plans were made for a speedy revenge for the death of Cradock. The utmost secrecy was enjoined by Lord Fisher and the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill. Telegrams had naturally to be continuously exchanged, but every precaution was taken against leakage.

A message was sent to the Grand Fleet to release *Invincible* and *Inflexible* and to send them in to Plymouth. On their arrival they were held up for a short time by the unavoidable necessity for certain preparations before they could set out for their task in the Southern Pacific. Here Lord Fisher took a firm line. He would brook no delay beyond the date specified by him, and if the vessels were not absolutely ready by that time they must set out, he said, taking the dockyard men aboard with them.

It was one of my duties to chart the movements of the German submarines on information supplied by

40 O.B. through their wireless intercepts. On their various journeys via the north of Scotland, when they were heading for the west coast of Ireland or the Bristol Channel, it was a comparatively easy matter to guess their destination and locate them. But when they were dodging about in the Ionian and Aegean Seas, they proved slippery customers indeed. They were literally here to-day and gone to-morrow. 40 O.B. might report that a U-boat was, for instance, off Andros, but though her wireless was working all the time neither we nor the Germans themselves could say where she might be to-morrow. The hundred and one possibilities of the Grecian Archipelago defeated us.

I remember how irritated Lord Fisher used to grow about this uncertain information concerning the U-boats in that part of the Mediterranean. At one time we were trying to keep track of a U-boat that was known to be making for Corfu. Finally she reached Rhodes, but all trace of her was lost in the interval, during which it was later discovered she made many visits, passing on her way down the coast Cephalonia, Zante, Cerigo, Andros, Ikaria and so on. Meantime various inaccurate and misleading reports about the submarine were being sent to us by an agent, a Greek with one eye. When Admiral Fisher read all the information we could gather about the Grecian Archipelago, he exploded into: "To hell with that one-eyed Greek!"

CHAPTER VI

ON the morning of the interview with Admiral Hall when I was appointed to my post as his confidential secretary, the Admiral in his conclusive but genial way rose from his chair and said :

“ Now, Hoy, come along and I will introduce you to Admiral Brownrigg, our Chief Naval Censor.”

The immediate impression that Sir Douglas Brownrigg produced, that of being a man of charm, humour and vast experience, was subsequently confirmed by every contact with and observation of his personality and work. His task was difficult and strenuous. Its boundaries were wide and undefined enough to bemuse a lesser mind. But Sir Douglas, who had formerly been Naval Attaché at Tokio, had every qualification of temperament and ability for this onerous post. He was “ well cast ” for the job, and he succeeded with honours where many another man, even as big as himself, would have failed.

Also it should, I think, be gratefully recorded of him that he was the life and soul of the Admiralty during those trying days when we all thought we were coming to the end of our tether. A cordial word, a witty remark, a harmless practical joke—with such impulsive means he lightened the load of overwork or depression for those round him. Such relaxations made for the general sanity of the staff.

One prank of his comes to mind. Two peers conducted their department with, as their head-

quarters, one of the ugly tin huts that had been hastily erected to house the rapidly congesting staff of the wartime Admiralty. One day I noticed that everyone who passed that way glanced at the hut, paused, and went on his way with a grin. That evening I myself went by, and then I saw the reason. Tacked outside the door was a large strip cut from a poster advertising the most popular London show of the moment. It read : THE BING BOYS.

Admiral Brownrigg began to make a hobby of cutting up posters and rearranging them, like an alternative solution of a jigsaw puzzle, for his own private amusement. One evening he cut and re-pasted some newspaper "special edition" posters, making from them a shattering announcement that Russia was utterly down and out. Then he gleefully placarded this where it was bound to catch the eye of the Russian Naval Attaché. It was my fortune to be on the spot when the attaché first saw it. His look of alarm was unforgettable, and I had to explain to him rather hurriedly that it was only one of Admiral Brownrigg's little jokes. I am afraid he was more relieved than amused, though.

The range of the Naval Censor's work at the beginning of the War included the search for indiscretions in the letters and telegrams of the officers and men of the Grand Fleet and the control of radio-telegraphy. These duties came to be enormously extended as hostilities progressed. Cables dealing with matters that were in the least suspect had to be sent to the Censor before they were released. A further important addition to Sir Douglas's responsibilities came to be the issuing of the Admiralty communiqués to the Press. The work was endless,

and during the whole period of the War the Naval Censor's office was at work night and day.

Incidentally, it sometimes happened that into the hands of this department communications came which proved to have no bearing whatever on the relations between the Navy and the homeland. I remember particularly how the time of the deciphering experts was wasted—from the point of view of war work—by one letter that by some accidental means found its way into the Censor's department.

This epistle was addressed to a certain well-known tipster. Its postmark was dubious, but proved to be Epsom. The letter itself was written in pencil, and its message was innocent enough, being to the effect of : “ I arrived quite safely and hope that you and the missus are quite well.” Clearly neither the origin nor the destination of the letter justified its inclusion in the day's batch of naval correspondence to be censored, but it was not the business of the staff to criticise this error. They carried on their duty of submitting it to expert examination, and the missive was put to a chemical test, according to routine.

The result, though oddly remote from naval affairs, was interesting. The chemical process revealed on the paper a closely written screed which showed that the writer at Epsom was the head lad of one of our leading trainers, and that this fellow had actually been giving away all his employer's stable secrets for long before the outbreak of the War. We forwarded this communication to the trainer at Epsom. He was immensely grateful for this fortuitous service on the part of our experts.

Later we heard of the closing scene of this little drama of real life. The trainer sent for his trusted

employee and promptly told him to "clear out, bag and baggage, immediately." The man protested his fifteen years of service, and seemed honestly bewildered by this sudden dismissal.

"Is there any reason for my being sacked like this?" he asked.

"That!" said the trainer, and he flung in front of the man his secret ink communication to the tipster.

I imagine that to this day the stable lad has not learned the circumstances and manner of his exposure.

In the early days of the War Admiral Brownrigg himself used to work the clock round, with the exception of a couple of hours of rest, which he snatched when things were comparatively quiet. It was absolutely necessary for this important organisation that he should have as peaceful and undisturbed a room as possible, and the Secretary of the Admiralty accommodated him in quarters out of earshot of the noises from the traffic ceaselessly passing up and down Whitehall. Unfortunately this desirable quiet did not last for more than a few weeks, for to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing staff at the Admiralty the erection of the tin and iron buildings—that came to be so famous an eyesore—was begun, and the banging and hammering, not to mention the transport of materials, went on day and night.

The issue of the naval communiqués to the Press made it necessary for Admiral Brownrigg to establish the relationship of the Naval Censorship with the Press Bureau. This liaison was an exceedingly delicate matter to adjust harmoniously.

Lord Birkenhead was, of course, in charge of the Press Bureau. This important department was housed at Charing Cross, and it was from that office

that the late Lord Birkenhead released to the Press one fine Sunday morning the staggering news of the retreat from Mons. I well remember getting a copy of *The Times* on that fateful morning, and learning a little later that the paper had been called in by the police.

Now, the Admiralty held no power over the Press Bureau, or this news, I may say without hesitation, would not have been passed for publication.

There was a wide divergence of opinion between Lord Birkenhead's department and the Admiralty on this matter of the policy of publishing outspoken war communiqués. It was this conflict in policy that made Admiral Brownrigg's task so difficult.

Lord Birkenhead held much the same view on the question of what the public should be allowed to know as did "Jacky" Fisher. Why, they said, keep the people in a fools' paradise? Let them know the worst as soon as possible. The general public had every right to demand that all the cards should be put on the table.

Other counsels held that this attitude was based on a faulty judgment of the nation's psychology, deeming that the people, instead of being braced to a stiffer resistance as the result of the receipt of bad news, might more conceivably be scared into insisting on peace at any price.

The Press Bureau's policy in issuing the news of the retreat from Mons caused considerable uneasiness at the Admiralty, and serious conclaves were held to discuss the wisdom of giving a free hand, in the event of an important naval battle, to Lord Birkenhead's organisation. The outcome was that with the approval of Mr. Winston Churchill, then First Lord



From a sketch by Raemaekers

ADMIRAL SIR W. R. HALL, K.C.M.G.
Director of Naval Intelligence, 1914-1918.



Lafayette

SIR DOUGLAS BROWNRIGG
Chief Naval Censor during the War.



of the Admiralty, a slight check was put on the activities of the Press Bureau in this regard. This, of course, caused friction, and it was actually some time before the Admiralty and the Press Bureau reached a harmonious working order.

Some restraint in the publication of our naval disasters was obviously of the first importance. Efficient arrangements were early made for acquainting the relatives of men in the Navy at the earliest possible moment with any bad news due to them, but complete information issued to the Press might have had effects that reached much further than distressing the nation or undermining its confidence. It was a game of secrecy between the two great sea Powers.

In my journeys about the country on behalf of the Intelligence Division, I saw how in one of our naval ports vague rumours had spread concerning one of our earliest naval disasters. I can never forget the utterly disorganised state of the town that day. Women and children were running about, distracted, weeping, suspicious that something had befallen, and asking for news.

"Where can we get news?" the waiting wives and mothers asked of every official or even sympathetic-looking person who crossed their path. "Aren't they going to tell us anything?"

It was Sir Douglas Brownrigg's organisation of the issue of Admiralty communiqués that in later days forestalled such scenes as this, and by watching the attitude of other belligerents towards the publication of their own war news he became confirmed in his own policy of selectivity.

One day he drew my attention to the comparative

news methods of two other warring nations, Russia and Turkey. When the Russians met with a disaster they freely admitted it, gave their exact total losses, and explained the cause of their defeat. The Turks, however, were beginning to learn from the communiqués of the Western Front.

Upon one occasion neither the Turks nor the Russians could fairly claim a victory. The Turkish communiqué was to this effect :

“ We have routed the Russian Army which has suffered tremendous losses. Thousands of killed and wounded.”

As a matter of fact, there had been a wholesale slaughter by the Turks, but it was a slaughter of the Armenians, not of the Russians ! The news was sheer crude bluff. Actually it was an attempt on the part of Turkey at discreet consideration of international psychology.

It was largely at the instigation of Lord Kitchener that so rigid a censorship of news had been instituted at the very outbreak of the World War. K. had had his lesson in the South African campaign, when “ news,” often faked, was used by speculators to play their private profit-and-loss games to the community’s disadvantage.

A friend told me of a meeting with the Field-Marshal in a West End club very soon after the declaration of war in August 1914. Knowing from Boer War days K.’s anger over the practices of some irresponsible pressmen, he asked Lord Kitchener :

“ What are you going to do about the Press ? ”

“ Press ? ” said Kitchener. “ There won’t be any Press until this business is finished.”

It is a sad reflection that, in some measure, it was the attacks of a section of the newspapers that robbed the greatest English soldier since Wellington of his prestige. Indirectly it was, I suppose, this undermining of Kitchener's influence in favour of that of now discredited politicians which freed him to set out for Russia and meet death in the North Sea.

This, too, led to the handing over of the command to the French—a state of affairs which would never have been accepted by the British, either at home or overseas, had not our great military leader been subjected to “enemy action” on the home front. Whatever may be said in favour of the much-debated unity of command, it is certain that Englishmen would never have consented to the supersession of their idol, Lord Kitchener, by a foreign generalissimo.

But with K. gone, much of the confidence of the man-in-the-street in our possession of any outstanding military genius went too. To me it has always seemed a tragic irony that in a manner of speaking it was a section of the Press which he had threatened to extinguish which extinguished the War Minister.

Naturally there was a considerable criticism of all types of censorship and regulation. But in the light of what is now public knowledge, no one in his senses will suggest that the authorities were by any means harsh in their interference with the liberties of the subject.

Some of the enemy agents in neutral countries must have laughed up their sleeves to think how slack our war organisation was—especially in the early days. This, as I have indicated, was a carefully thought out plan to entrap them. Just as we allowed spies in pre-War days to operate apparently unnoticed, so

was dubious correspondence occasionally passed on after being examined until the whole conspiracy was diagnosed.

Our secret department's slogan was :

" Give them enough rope and . . . "

As the War progressed it became necessary to start another department called the War Trade Intelligence, which sifted all sorts of communications and then passed on anything of importance to the Chief Censor in the first place and ultimately to the Intelligence Division. Such of this mass of correspondence and cables as concerned the Navy found a billet in Admiral Brownrigg's department. The Admiral never failed to pass on to us anything in the intercepts (often unprintable !) which tickled his sense of humour.

In March of 1917 Admiral Sims was due to arrive at Queenstown, and it was imperative that this should be kept a deadly secret, presaging as it so obviously did a declaration of war upon Germany by the United States. Following almost on his heels came General Pershing, and once more the Admiralty wires were pulled with discretion while he landed at Liverpool and from there headed for France. The American Admiral, however, got into touch at Queenstown with our Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, then Commander-in-Chief at Queenstown, and amongst the important matters settled at that time was the conduct of our Naval Censorship as far as the communications from American sailors were concerned.

It was decided that although of course all these letters and telegrams must be censored on this side, most of them should—by Admiral Sims' request, as he considered them on the whole to be quite innocuous—be passed.

But even more important than this was the matter of handling American journalists, the number of whom increased enormously with the arrival of their fleet and army. It was some time before Sir Lewis Bayly would consent to the issue of naval news to American pressmen. Like Lord Jellicoe he greatly disliked this publicity, but finally he compromised by agreeing to provide information for two representatives of the American Press.

I must confess that the Admiralty was almost pestered by Transatlantic reporters. Their technique is very different from that of their English brothers of the pen, and in their own country they are accustomed to a much easier accessibility to those who hold office. We certainly found them much more insistent than our own journalists, and were at first inclined to resent their calm assumption that at any time the First Sea Lord or the Prime Minister would grant them interviews. I remember how puzzled the First Sea Lord was by some of their forceful and graphic American idioms !

A working agreement was made between the Chief Censor and Admiral Hall early in the War in regard to the issue of news to representatives of the various important papers, who from the beginning included many Americans. As the most time-saving and satisfactory method of interviewing these journalists, Admiral Hall evolved a system of entertaining them to tea once a week, when he would give them a general résumé of the past week's achievements. Admittedly he did this with discretion, not to say bluff, at which he was a past master.

I remember an occasion on which the Admiral scored off one of the American interviewers who was

always irrepressibly inquisitive and impervious to tactful rebuffs. When the pressmen had arrived one day for their weekly tea and chat, the Admiral touched a bell-button conveniently hidden beneath his table—a movement that even the trained watchful eyes of these news-seekers could not have observed. The bell rang into my room, and by prearrangement I then entered the conference and placed before Admiral Hall some of our “pink” telegrams.

One of these wires announced that we had sunk three German submarines off the coast of Dover. The telegrams were slyly placed in such a position on the table that the American journalist could not fail to succumb to the temptation of stealthily reading them. The Admiral carried on the conversation quietly, and led it round to a point where he said :

“Of course, we don’t publish our successes against the U-boats, for the obvious reason that we do not want the enemy to realise for certain how many of their best ships are sunk.”

This, of course, was good policy, for it kept the Germans guessing, and checked their construction of fresh U-boats to make up for depredations.

But whether the journalist ate the forbidden fruit so enticingly laid in his reach by Admiral Hall I never knew.

The attention of a number of enterprising journalists was naturally rivetted through the duration of the War upon the Naval Intelligence Department. But as I have explained elsewhere, little or nothing was known, and that little only to a favoured few, of the personnel and conduct of 40 O.B. It was the Secret Service of the Silent Service. It pursued its policy in its own unobtrusive but miraculously efficient way.

Naturally, too, there was much speculation, and surmises were bandied about as fact. Occasionally among journalistic acquaintances who had no idea of the nature of my employment I was regaled by entertaining stories of what went on in the secret recesses of the Admiralty, unveracious accounts of what had transpired on certain occasions and of the exploits of persons erroneously supposed to be secret agents.

One of Admiral Brownrigg's inspirations for diverting the minds of the men at Scapa Flow was to forward to them extracts from some of the more amusing letters that were handled in his department. We learned that they were highly appreciated, so from time to time further items were published for the Grand Fleet's edification.

Evidently many of the wives of men on naval service, lacking the more experienced business sense of their husbands, found difficulty in filling up the official forms of application for child allowance. The Secretary of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Family Allowances Department therefore found himself appealed to in such cases, and such gems as the following were noted :

" Dear Sir, I am expecting to be confined next month and will you please tell me what I am to do about it ? "

" Dear Sir, According to instructions on paper X—— I have given birth to a daughter on April 21st."

" Dear Sir, I write these few lines for Mrs. Hayes who cant write herself. She is expecting to be confined and can do with it."

" Dear Sir, Mrs. Smith has been put to bed with a little lad. . . . Wife of Peter Smith."

Trivial complaints were, of course, numerous, but this one has a disarming diffidence :

“ Dear Sir, You have changed my little boy into a girl, will it make any difference ? ”

Other naïve communications ran :

“ My husband has been away three weeks at the Crystal Police [sic] and got four days furlong and has now gone back to the mind sweepers.”

“ We received your letter. . . . I am his grandfather and grandmother. He was born and brought up in this house in answer to your letter.”

“ I have received no pay since my husband has been from nowhere.”

And despite its length, I cannot resist quoting in this context the following heart cry which was received in this department :

“ RESPECTED SIR DEAR SIR,

Though I take this liberty as it leaves me at present I beg to ask if you will kindly be kind enough to let me know where my husbin is though he not my legible husbin as he has a wife though he says she is ded I dont think he nos for sure but we are not married though I am getting my alotement reglar which is no fault of Mr Loy George who would stop it if he could or Mr Mckenna but if you where he is as he belongs to the Royal Naval Fling Corps for ever since he joined in the January when he was sacked from his work for talking back at his boss which was a woman at the laundry where he worked. I have not had any money from him since he joined though he told Mrs Arris who lives on the ground

floor that he was a pretty officer for 6 shilling a week and lots of undercloths for the cold weather and I have three children what is being the father of them though he says it was my fault. Hoping you will write and you are quite well as it leaves me at present. I must close now hoping you are well.

Yours truly,

MRS. X——."

I think it must have been from the Censorship Department that the following squib, authorship unknown, came into my hands :

A " TERRIBLE " CREED. (With apologies to the Apostles).

I believe in Percy Scott, Captain ubiquitous,
Lord of Humility, Maker of gun-carriages,

And of all things advertised and not advertised,
And in the Terribles, the heroes unlimited, the
breakers of records,

And in one Dotter, invention of one Captain, the
only begotten son of modesty,

By whom most things are puffed ; who, for the
Navy and for our salvation, came down from Whale
Island and was self-incarnated Reformer of Evils,

And was made Captain, and was persecuted
under the Admiralty,

Captain of the Scylla, Captain of the Terrible,
Percy Scott of Percy Scott, born not made, being
one with himself, and for ever with the Daily Mail,

Saviour of Ladysmith, he suffered at Durban,
and was unsufficiently rewarded,

And the next time he arose in China to slay
Boxers, according to the papers,

And in the fourth year he returned to Portsmouth,
And he ascended unto Balmoral, and sitteth on
the right hand of the King ; and he shall be heard
of again, with glory belated, to teach self-deprecia-
tion to a nation whose adulation shall have no
end,

And I believe in the Deflection Teacher, the
Lord and Giver of Points, who proceedeth from
the Scylla, and the Terrible, who with the Terribles
together is feted and glorified, who spake by the
newspapers ;

And I believe in one Loading Tray, the Key for
Selection ;

I confess to one Flashing Lamp, Electro-
mechanical, Light of Lights, very Flash of very
Flash ;

I acknowledge one Shutter, for the emission of
signs,

And I look for the paying-off of the Terrible, and
the distribution of more honours to come.

The first months of the war-time Naval Censorship constituted a hectic period for Sir Douglas Brownrigg. Between the Cabinet, the War Office, the Press Bureau and the Press itself, he had his work cut out to maintain comfortable relations all round. It was a situation that demanded a man of efficiency and poise. The Naval Censor remained cool and equable throughout, and quickly arranged the orderly functioning of his department to meet each new emergency as it arose.

One of these emergencies to which the Censorship Department had to adapt itself was the addition to their already wide-spreading tasks of yet another.

This was the checking of all railway time-tables together with the various cross-Channel connections. Naturally this developed into an important item of the department's routine, and necessitated both secrecy and accuracy. All the travel agencies and the railroad and steamship organisations were ordered to keep in touch with the Admiralty, which they supplied with full and reliable details for the carrying out of this task.

The loss of the *Leinster*, an Irish Channel boat which was sunk in 1918, was the only disaster in our cross-Channel service.

The whole question of naval censorship was much argued in all sorts of quarters, but nowhere more than among the officers and men of the Fleet whose letters and wires had all to be opened and read in the Admiralty department. While the men were actually with the Fleet their communications were satisfactorily overlooked by the officers, but when ashore this investigation became a censorship matter, and for some time the receipt of letters marked "Opened by Censor" caused considerable indignation. The men obviously judged that there was no harm in writing frankly and descriptively to their relatives. They could not know, as the Secret Service knew, of the possibility of the leakage to Germany of the information such letters gave. Actually some of their epistles were highly indiscreet, and related facts for which the Germans would have paid millions of marks.

In due course the censorship staff was widely ramified, and naval censors were posted at all the principal cable and wireless stations. One of these, Clifden (County Galway), was put on the danger list,

as from that point important, and from our point of view undesirable, information could have reached America.

I recall the astonishment of the late Lord Long, then First Lord, when I acquainted him with the possible leakage of his communications with Dublin Castle. Lord Long had a long telephone conversation with the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I remarked that he must remember to be guarded in what he said in view of possible tapping of the line.

"But no one can hear what I say. I'm speaking to Dublin Castle direct."

I contented myself with ejaculating the one word :
"Kingstown !"

The First Lord started. Then he said :

"Thank you, Hoy. I'd never thought of that."

Until that moment he had not been warned that the enemy could have heard every word if they had been listening-in.

I think that the most strenuous task the Naval Censorship ever had to face was the mass of telegrams that followed the battle of Jutland. Up to that time the number of inland messages passing through our hands had been comparatively small. But when what remained of the Grand Fleet got to the various ports, the post offices of the northern naval ports were inundated with wires concerning the casualties, and enquiries relative to the safety or welfare of our men. These were forwarded to the Admiralty, and amounted to more than ten thousand. Should they be held up or released ? There was much to be said on behalf of either decision.

They were eventually released, after a delicate consideration of all the points involved. Edinburgh

was the storm centre to which the chief factors under discussion were directed. The people of Edinburgh had learned that a great naval battle was in progress, and as the German wireless communiqué reported that the Grand Fleet had been defeated—and by only a part of the High Seas Fleet—all sorts of wild rumours were rife. The deluge of telegrams only added to the general panic. It was even related from Edinburgh that when the British sailors came ashore at the Firth of Forth and went to Edinburgh, they were booed in Princes Street.

Fortunately, Lord Jellicoe was able after a few days to issue a correct communiqué which squashed all these rumours—a communiqué which was necessarily and pardonably delayed by the difficulties in gathering all the details of this great fight. As a matter of fact, Admiral Jellicoe, while he was in pursuit of the German fleet, was not aware of some of our own losses, which included *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable*.

During these days when the Admiralty was exercised about the attitude of Edinburgh' it fell to my lot to visit that lovely city on an important mission, and I shall never forget the extraordinary state of congestion under which it existed at that time. It was literally occupied from garret to cellar. I arrived there in the evening, and optimistically set out to find accommodation in one of the principal hotels. But as my errand was most secret, I did not care to show my card which, revealing my connection with the Intelligence Division, would have secured me all I needed. Nor did I wish to say how long I was staying, and when this question was put to me I replied : " Oh, a couple of days," tactically, I found,

an injudicious reply, for nowhere was accommodation forthcoming.

At 2 a.m., therefore, homeless and weary, I found myself sitting in Princes Street Station, wondering if I should be able to execute my mission properly after a sleepless and uncomfortable night. A cabman came to my rescue, and after driving for an hour all round the city I found a room in a poor quarter. My surroundings were decorated with photographs of the landlady's sons in the Gordon Highlanders, and she, poor haggard-looking soul, was keeping the home fires burning with the aid of a delicate daughter. The latter, surprised and speechless when I pressed on her a five-pound note in lieu of the absurd three shillings and sixpence asked for bed and breakfast, could not of course understand the grateful feelings of one whose alternative refuge for the night was a seat on a railway station.

CHAPTER VII

ONE of the preoccupations of the Admiralty and other war services was the business of dealing with the would-be spy-catchers who cropped up in unexpected numbers from every stratum of society. The suspiciousness of human nature was certainly never better exemplified than it was in this particular wartime hysteria, which affected not only the ignorant and stupid but even members of the highest social circles.

Every day a stream of information from such people poured into the Admiralty. However ludicrous some of these reports might appear, they had to be investigated, for we could afford to run no risks. Society women, learning somehow or other that our Intelligence Division was the correct place in which to lay information, and not liking the atmosphere of Scotland Yard, were frequent callers at the Admiralty, for they were among the most ardent spy-hunters. Finally a special department was created at the Admiralty to investigate into these too numerous reports.

First of all there was the story of a secretly-laid cable from Germany to a point, unnamed, on the east coast of Scotland or the Hebrides. Intelligent people who in normal times would not dream of such a thing were convinced of its existence, and when they felt that the Admiralty was not attempting to prove the fact they appealed to well-known writers

and scientists to take up their case. None of these informants could state authoritatively how such a cable had been laid without the cognisance of the British authorities, but that it existed for the purpose of the betrayal of the movements of our fleet they were convinced.

If this report was enquired into once, it was investigated scores of times, and always with a completely negative result—no cable and no trace of any cable having ever been laid.

Then we were bombarded with accounts of signals which, it was alleged, were being made to Zeppelins and other hostile aircraft. These reports were comparatively circumstantial, the attention of the Naval Intelligence Department being drawn to mysterious lights in various parts of the country.

An apparent *prima facie* case was reported from Scarborough, where the manager of one of the principal hotels happened to be of German origin and was consequently under suspicion. Lights were seen to be continually being turned on and off in one of the top rooms, and local opinion was confirmed in its doubts. A Scotland Yard man was sent post-haste from London to enquire into these suspicious circumstances, but he discovered that the changing lights, instead of signalling to hostile aircraft or raiders, were caused by nothing more sinister than the opening and closing of a lavatory door! In extenuation of their complaints it should be remembered that the people of Scarborough were at that time in a highly apprehensive state in their exposed position on the eastern seaboard.

Again it was reported that at Crowborough, Sussex, the occupants of a camp had observed Morse signals

being sent from a house on the hillside. When in consequence the house was surrounded, the occupants, two old ladies, were badly frightened at finding, when they opened the door in response to knocking, that there was an armed detachment outside. The Morse code proved to be the effect of the branches of a tree waving in the breeze before a lighted window and naturally breaking the light rays.

These are but two instances of hundreds that we had perforce to investigate at this time, in spite of the obvious weakness of any case which was based on signals to Zeppelins being made from an ordinary window. The switching on and off of lights was sufficient to arouse suspicions in numbers of well-intentioned people, who were especially enthusiastic if the person concerned had any connection, however slight, with the Continent.

Allegations of secret wireless ran those of the signalling lights very close. Wireless was a more difficult matter for the experts to investigate, for the science was then more or less embryonic, but at any rate no leakages were ever discovered through such means, despite the closest watch.

The high social standing of some of the people who brought their suspicions to headquarters was always sure to expedite their getting a hearing, and, in cases where their information appeared to deserve consideration, to get them through to responsible officials. I think that in the following instance one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty displayed a rare sense of responsibility—and perhaps of humour!

His wife alleged that there was in Hanover Square a secret wireless, that all her friends knew of it too,

and that it was clearly the means of disloyal communication with Germany. She was referred to the Intelligence Division, and after her story was heard a special detective was sent to verify it.

When he went to the first floor of the building in Hanover Square where the traitor was supposed to be at work, he found a brass plate on the door with this inscription :

W. R. LESSON
GUN MAKER

In the first months of the War the Admiralty had several calls from a tall woman dressed in black who asked each time insistently for Lord Fisher and declined to see anyone else. She was always told that it was impossible to see him, when she would retire and try again the next day. But when the First Sea Lord continued to be inaccessible she gave in and consented to tell her tale in Admiral Hall's department.

Upon entering the room she asked solemnly :
" Am I speaking between four walls ? "

" Certainly, madam."

" Well, do you know Lord Haldane ? "

" Not personally."

" Do you know that he has a wireless set ? "

" No."

" You know that his spiritual home is in Germany?"

" I believe he is reported to have said so."

" Well, he has a wireless set. He is at it every night, too."

" Where is it ? "

" At his London residence."

" Do you know what part of the house it is in ? "

" Yes. He works it up the chimney in the drawing-

room. He gave away the strength of the British Fleet at Skagerrak the night before the battle."

I duly noted all this, and she then continued :

" Do you know Mr. Bonar Law ? "

" Not personally."

" He has a wireless set too, the very latest make from Germany."

" Can you tell us where he is working it from ? "

" I'm sorry, but in this case I don't know the exact room."

Finally, before she departed the lady said earnestly :

" There won't be a word about this, will there ? In these days one cannot consider one's friends—the fate of the country is at stake."

A full report of this visit and conversation was sent to Scotland Yard ! However fantastic the story, it was the Admiralty's policy to give it the fullest investigation.

One day a man came to the Admiralty to expose the treacherous uses to which our daily papers were, he alleged, being put. He described himself as a " code expert " from the City, and made the startling announcement that information respecting the movements of our troops was being conveyed in the personal columns of the newspapers. Certain members of the Cabinet were inclined to believe his allegation that our secrets were being given away through this hitherto unsuspected channel.

The informant was admitted to an interview with Admiral Hall, who heard his story and arranged for him to return to the Admiralty as soon as he had further definite proof to lay before the D.N.I. Then the Admiral had a " spoof " advertisement inserted in the personal column of *The Times*.

Within two days the "code expert" came back in a state of high excitement with the result of his recent perusals of the newspapers. Before the Admiral he triumphantly laid the "spoof" advertisement! This, by some tortuous process of his own, he deciphered into a message disclosing the movements of certain battleships from naval ports, whose names were, according to him, clearly specified by his code discovery as those of Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth.

I remember that the D.N.I.'s manner was most sympathetic, and he advised the man to take a much-needed rest-cure!

Disturbing information was proffered by various people concerning the Kaiser's Corfu palace, and engaged the serious attention of the authorities. It was alleged to have been prepared long before the War as a submarine base, and further reports declared that a secret pipe had been run from the palace out to sea for the purpose of replenishing the vessels with oil so as to avoid the waste of time incurred by the long voyage back to Kiel. Lord Fisher was deeply interested in these stories, for if this pipe actually existed it was of great strategical importance to the Fleet. But none of our craftiest efforts produced any confirmation of its existence, and as time went on the First Sea Lord grew more sceptical.

He came into Admiral Hall's office one evening and, as he frequently did, asked:

"Any more about the Kaiser's oil-pipe?"

A summary of the reports was shown to him, proving that the total result of the investigations up to date was negligible. He looked through it, and with his own inimitable scowl of disgust exclaimed:

" Oh, damn his palace ! Let's get on with the War ! "

Another of these items of information that merited close investigation was that the uniforms of British naval officers were being worn in this country by Germans. One was reported to have been seen at Portsmouth and another at Chatham. Later we received news of another at Devonport, and later still similar reports reached us from Edinburgh and Harwich. Most of these observations were made by people who were more or less reliable. But when in addition to these reports from suspicious civilians some naval officers declared that they had seen a German masquerading in this guise in a West End tavern, it was clear that the time had arrived for a thorough enquiry.

Now the naval uniforms were supplied from a Bond Street firm. This firm was accordingly requested to supply the Admiralty with a list of orders daily, together with the names and rank of the officers concerned. When the list arrived at the Admiralty the commissions were checked with the names. But though for the whole four years of the War this daily check was continued, no order for a British uniform was ever found to have come from a German.

In retrospect many of these alarms and excursions take on a complexion of absurdity, but under the stress of war conditions the nation was naturally in a highly credulous state in which the simplest phenomena took on a strange import. I think probably the feeblest complaint that was ever handled by the authorities was one that implicated a nun in the West of England. This nun, said the informants, was always followed on her walks by an Irish terrier

—and that was the whole story ! Well, even this yarn had to be made the subject of enquiries, which elicited the fact that the dog did not belong to the nun, and had merely made a habit of following her every time she left the convent !

At another time the Intelligence Division was asked to follow up the case of a retired engineer who had been arrested under suspicion of having, for enemy pay, been involved in the blowing up of *Bulwark*. This man, it appeared, was refreshing himself liberally in a bar at Chatham when the news of the explosion arrived. He promptly ordered drinks all round and lifting his own glass said :

“ To hell with Jacky Fisher ! ”

After a few more glasses he grew genially expansive and hinted that he could, if he chose, explain the disaster, about which he expressed great satisfaction.

Enquiries demonstrated without any doubt that the engineer was merely a man in a state of intoxication with a grievance against the First Sea Lord, and that he had been guilty of no share in the explosion nor of any act of treachery.

Even the pigeons did not escape the eagle eyes of the spy-scared public. When one flew from a spot in St. James's Park where a man who was obviously a foreigner was standing, the poor fellow was promptly arrested on suspicion of using the bird to convey messages to the enemy. There were similar scares all over the country. The pigeon-watchers felt that their case was really established when a pigeon was caught in Essex with a message from Rotterdam attached to its leg in a small aluminium box. But the note, when put to expert chemical tests, revealed no more than was conveyed on the surface of the paper—the news

of the arrival at Rotterdam of an innocent cargo boat.

The melodramatic mentality of a young girl from Bath was the cause of a mild sensation which resulted in her being brought to London to be questioned at the Admiralty. Her story was that through her pretended love for a foreigner she had discovered that he was in nightly communication with Berlin, and she told it in great and credible detail. At any rate her employer—a well-known doctor who dabbled in psychical research—believed her, and he had every appearance of being a shrewd and level-headed man.

A detective from Scotland Yard was brought in to hear the girl's story on her arrival at the Admiralty. After he had put many pertinent questions to the young woman, he made the odd request that he should be allowed to take her for a motor drive to Richmond. On his return he was able to allay the fears of Bath by his assurance that the whole story was a concoction. How on earth he managed to extract this confession of her lying from the neurotic girl only himself knows !

The police all over the country were frequently visited by these "spy maniacs," as we used to call the tale-bearers. All aliens were suspect, and it was not unusual for the authorities to have to instigate as many as five hundred investigations daily into charges brought against foreigners. Waiters who had to leave England hurriedly to fight for their own countries were nearly all regarded as spies, though doubtless the majority of them were entirely innocent. The number of enquiries was not lessened by the fact that it was, of course, difficult for the ordinary policeman to distinguish between the various

European nationalities: the neutral Swede, Norwegian, Swiss, Dutchman or Dane was to him superficially like the enemy Austrian and German; all were potential spies.

At the Admiralty itself there was constant precaution lest a German secret agent might audaciously insinuate himself on to the premises, and such a contingency was guarded against as far as possible by special warnings to Scotland Yard. If such a person had managed to get through one of the front entrances, it might not be impossible for him by clever impersonation to gain admittance into one department or another and thus be in a position to obtain valuable information. However, in addition to the police precautions, every habitué of the Admiralty was on the alert at the sight of a stranger, who had to run the gauntlet of a lynx-eyed staff before he was permitted to enter the inner precincts.

One of the mysteries that for a long time teased the Intelligence Department and Scotland Yard as well—and was never conclusively solved—was the identity of a peace-at-almost-any-price member of the community. We received in the first instance information from the French Government that we had in London, in the person of someone of high standing, a counterpart of the French "Bolo." They put on us the responsibility of investigating the strength of the peace movement in this country, and of tracing the unknown person to whom we used to refer as "Bolo II."

The combined wits of Admiral Hall and Sir Basil Thomson were of no avail, although all sorts of crafty schemes, guarded by the deepest secrecy, were hatched to run him down. At this date it seems to have been

sheer madness that dictated some of the suspicions that were voiced—but so rife did these run at the time that among them was, I remember, the ludicrous suggestion that our “Bolo” might be the late Sir Ernest Cassel (that friend of the late King Edward, the benevolent lover of England who bestowed millions on London charities), Lady Asquith and Sir John Simon.

Now Scotland Yard does not relish defeat. Its efforts at unveiling the mystery of “Bolo II’s” identity were, as I have said, many and varied, and one of them will always remain in my memory, a desperate and somewhat fantastic idea. It was decided to open in the West End a bogus wine establishment of a first-class order in charge of an expert detective, on the off-chance of his discovering among or from his clientele the mysterious man.

The detective who was to take control knew as much about wine as the Salvation Army’s General Booth! He had to be taught. He was therefore sent down to a large store in Mincing Lane to learn the business. There, as his first elementary lesson, he was given a dose of the rawest and vilest sherry under the sun. Next morning he was asked how he felt. “Rotten!” was his answer. The connoisseurs at the head of the Mincing Lane firm then gave him some of their most exquisite and expensive sherry. Next day he stated enthusiastically that he felt splendid. Thus he had completed Lesson I, and soon had made quick enough progress to be able to open his establishment in a short time.

The result was a complete failure as far as getting on the track of “Bolo II” went—though I remember that the shop did very good business!

Attached to the Intelligence Division at this time was a certain member of the governing classes, who of course was in the secret of all these carefully arranged searches, and who seemed amused by them. The elaborate wine-shop scheme brought from him a smile and the sly remark :

“ Why, Bolo is in front of you ! ”

He said no more, and we were left wondering about the truth of rumours that had for a long time been attached to himself !

Communications of the suspicions entertained by the general public came into our hands in all sorts of ways. Many people, as I have already mentioned, tried to pay personal visits to the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty, but these were members of the better classes who were not easily daunted by any fears of the formalities of Whitehall. Others besieged Scotland Yard, and there lodged their complaint in person. In the provinces the police headquarters would be visited by local residents who were bursting with information they wished to convey.

Letters, of course, were received in all these quarters. In most cases these were signed by the well-meaning writer, but there were numbers of anonymous communications with which it was much more difficult to deal. In time of war it was impossible to ignore any suspicion even if anonymously expressed, for the suspicious type of mind is a timid one, full of imaginative fears of reprisals following its acts.

Much of our information came through letters “ Opened by Censor ”—but this might, of course, be described as “ official ” suspicion, and therefore does not here come under discussion as being a direct appeal to us for investigation. But what hundreds of

“ spy maniacs ” were revealed to the patient readers in the Mail Censorship departments !

Besides the communications that came into our hands through Censorship channels, we had a certain amount of other correspondence to deal with, chiefly forwarded to us by Scotland Yard. Such letters were sent for our investigation under suspicion that they might reveal something of national importance, but though occasional danger spots were disclosed by this means the majority proved only a revelation of the private affairs of various people.

If only a tithe of these discoveries had been used as evidence for divorce, the Divorce Court would have had to supplement its judges, and I doubt whether they would have cleared up the arrears of these cases even at this distant date ! These documents accumulated to such bulk that by the end of the War they filled a large safe.

Behind many of these communications we found a motive of pure spite, more often than not on the part of women of the wealthier class who, having by fair means or foul got wind of some illicit love affair, would put a traitorous complexion on the matter and report it in this guise to Scotland Yard.

One concrete instance of this was the exposure by this means of the personal life of a famous racehorse owner, who was discovered by the informants to be living with a woman with German relatives. Not only Scotland Yard but also the Admiralty Intelligence Division was bombarded with letters from the tell-tales. The man's residence was quietly raided, but as nothing incriminating was found the matter resulted in the internment of the unfortunate woman victim of these malicious reports,

A case that touched more closely upon our department occurred at a certain naval base. A naval officer of high repute was reported to be living with a lady of German extraction. A detective was sent down to investigate into the truth of the story, and as I happened to be in the base at the same time I saw him in action, so to speak. He stayed quietly at his hotel for a few days, making observations, and then in the early hours one morning he raided the house where the couple had taken up quarters, and got all the evidence he wanted then and there. The woman was interned and the officer sent to a distant station. Stringent investigations were made but no proof was ever obtained that he had betrayed any matter of the least importance.

When at the end of the War Admiral Hall decided that all the correspondence referring to the domestic affairs of various notable people should be burned, the mass I selected from the safe was astonishing. I must admit that I followed the messenger wheeling the truck along passage after passage to the furnace and saw them finally consigned to the flames with a feeling of satisfaction.

The Intelligence Division was naturally informed by Scotland Yard of cases of suspicious conduct in which the police were compelled to make raids. These forced searches, too, often resulted in strange discoveries, many of them in no way germane to the War.

A neutral gentleman, reputed to be immensely wealthy, came under Scotland Yard's observation—the eccentricity of his movements having of themselves raised doubts as to his integrity of purpose in this country. He used to make frequent visits to the

East End, always with a black handbag on which he never relaxed his careful hold. He was closely watched for some time, but as external observations failed to reveal anything incriminating, it was ultimately decided to raid his house. What was discovered there cannot be printed ! And yet, not very long after, I read with amazement of a fashionable wedding at which he appeared as the bridegroom.

During a recent case in the Law Courts an inventor informed the judge that during the War his house was raided and very valuable documents taken away. They were concerned with an anti-submarine device, and though they represented the inventor's personal and honourable occupation only, they were never returned. The judge expressed his surprise that such a thing could occur, even during the War, but it did.

An interesting seizure was made at the house of a self-styled professor whose nationality had been in doubt for some time. Though he was certainly not an enemy agent, grave suspicion was roused by documents relating to various chemical processes. The sequel proved rather amusing to me personally, taking me back to a pre-War incident.

Before the declaration of war, a Rubber Exhibition was held at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, where one of the most sensational displays was a synthetic rubber of German manufacture, which it was claimed could be produced in large quantities at sixpence a pound. As the price of raw rubber was at that time very high, the adoption of this new article would spell ruin for our rubber estates and heavy losses to shareholders. The Stock Exchange and Mincing Lane were disturbed, stabilised quotations were made difficult, and directors of rubber companies and many

stockbrokers flocked to the Agricultural Hall. The synthetic rubber samples were put to every conceivable test, and the rubber experts were forced to agree gloomily that they were equal to the best stuff the rubber estates could produce.

Among the people whose fortunes were at stake was the Hon. Everard Feilding, a director of many companies. Inevitably the story reached his friends. I happened to be present when some of the latter called upon him and asked if he meant to protect himself by selling out part of his huge holding.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Feilding. "It would be dishonest," and glancing towards the piano near which he was sitting he added with a smile: "If I'm ruined I shall at least have a piano left!"

Now for the connection of this pre-War occurrence with the correspondence seized from the professor's house by Scotland Yard during the War. After the police had made this raid Sir Basil Thomson telephoned to say he would like to see me some time. When I called on him at the Yard he handed me the whole of the captured documents, and said: "When you've looked at these you may like to tell Mr. Feilding about them." I discovered that the chemical process which had roused the suspicions of the authorities was connected with the manufacture of synthetic rubber, that the professor had been concerned in the German display of this material at the Agricultural Hall Exhibition, and lastly, that this exhibit had been a fake! The letters showed that the "synthetic rubber" that had aroused the approval of the experts was in actual fact the best samples of the genuine article obtainable from the famous Highlands and Lowlands and Kuala Lumpur Estates.

It was an almost incredible trick to perpetrate. Instead of testing the manufactured article, the visitors to the Exhibition were examining their own products !

Mr. Feilding heard from me this story when he returned to this country after the War with, I imagine, mixed sentiments.

However, the interest of this large portion of the public of the suspiciously-minded type was not confined to reporting the alleged incriminating conduct which at times came under their notice. These people might perhaps be divided into two groups, the destructively suspicious and the constructively suspicious. The latter kept the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty constantly supplied with inventive ideas which they deemed worthy to be put into use for the frustration of some of the enemy's activities.

Day by day a stream of worthless projects and inventive ideas poured into the Admiralty for consideration. Of these the majority found their way pretty quickly into the waste-paper basket, but many were given due consideration before being definitely rejected.

An American sea-captain was responsible for one of the wild-cat schemes which came into our department. He suggested that, subject to the Admiralty's permission and co-operation, of course, he should take a ship into the Kiel Canal and blow up this channel. As America was not then at war, the captain contended that by flying the American flag he could gain an entrance into the canal and by these tactics put the High Seas Fleet into a very awkward position. It seems barely credible at this date—but nevertheless it is true—that there were many in high official quarters who thought the captain deserved encouragement.

Another and a much more fantastic proposition was that German submarines might be located by means of seagulls. The initiator's idea was that plenty of food should be exposed on our own vessels to attract seagulls, who would thus gradually become trained to associate all craft with their own sustenance, and eventually form the habit of hovering over—and thus betraying the presence of—the U-boats. A draft of this odd suggestion—not the work of a visionary but of a scientist of some standing!—was sent up to Lord Jellicoe in the Grand Fleet.

One day a gentleman arrived at the Intelligence Division in a glow of enthusiasm over a notion he had conceived for the destruction of the colossal German munition factory of Krupps' at Essen. There were certain exotic birds, he informed us, that if imported and released by us near Essen (the means not specified) would bit by bit pick Krupps' to pieces.

"The only snag," he confessed a little sadly, "is the considerable length of time the destruction would take."

The post-War generation reading this may well be forgiven if they assume that during 1914-18 a certain amount of lunacy was prevalent!

CHAPTER VIII

SOME of the most dramatically exciting—and some of the most tragic and heart-rending—affairs of our Intelligence Division during the War were involved with that age-old accessory of war, espionage.

Every nation has, of course, its spies abroad, even in peace-time. This method of keeping *au courant* with internationally important developments in other countries is more persistently practised by some people than others. The growing, exuberant, over-populated nation is, for obvious reasons, the most likely to keep its network, spangled with watching eyes, across the world.

Germany, for half a century before the great eruption of 1914, had, I believe, the biggest system of military espionage on earth.

When war broke out she was thoroughly well informed. As a great trading nation it naturally came about that vast numbers of her nationals settled in foreign countries. The numerous spies among these settlers easily escaped detection. Their purpose generally seemed innocent enough. Different varieties of trade or professional occupation were a very satisfactory cover for their activities.

In many cases these German agents could disguise their nationality. Countries bordering on Germany, for example, unwittingly housed many Germans who, by reason of their easily-acquired linguistic facility,

could pass as members of the country of their habitation or of some friendly and harmless little state. France, in particular, gave employment to ostensible Swiss, Belgians, Dutchmen and natives of the intervening provinces, who were actually Germans.

This led to much confusion after the outbreak of war. Waiters, hairdressers, hotel servants and the like, answering to the above descriptions, were welcomed in various European countries. We ourselves had in England thousands of foreign workers engaged in these occupations, many of them of more or less undetermined nationality. A Swiss waiter, a German waiter, a Belgian cook—outwardly these are hardly to be discriminated between by the average British citizen.

When in August 1914 the foreigners resident in this country were carefully combed through, a greater number of resident Germans was exposed than had ever been surmised. All inevitably came under suspicion. The foreigner was a marked man. But suspicion is not proof—and the authorities were kept very busy in their vigilant search for actual cases of enemy-supported espionage.

As the War progressed, the net spread out across the country by Scotland Yard and the Intelligence Services was so small-meshed that only a spy of exceptional cunning could slip through it. The result was that the German Secret Service men began to use more daring and original methods than ever.

There began a sudden influx of commercial travel-
to flourish for
—a surprising
is of the times.

Amongst these Dutch business arrivals were two who called themselves Haicke Petrus Marinus Janssen and Wilhelm Johannes Roos. They apparently represented very prosperous firms, for each day either one or the other used to hand in telegrams containing orders for large consignments of cigars.

It was an officer in the censorship who first expressed suspicions of the business on which both Roos and Janssen were employed, a luxury trade which was so thriving as to necessitate such a flow of telegrams. He had the wires collected and examined, and it was then discovered that every one of them had been sent from some naval port. One day Portsmouth wanted ten thousand Coronas and Chatham wanted five thousand. The next day Plymouth and Devonport had been bitten also with a craving for cigars. There was a large order from Newcastle, too.

Enquiries were put into motion in Holland, and it was learned that the head office of the firm in Holland to which all orders were addressed was in fact no more than an insignificant back room in a business premises. And suspicion was confirmed when it was reported that this address was visited every day by a mysterious German.

A few hours after these facts were sent here, Janssen and Roos found themselves detained by Scotland Yard officers. But they were arrested separately. Neither was aware that the other had been taken.

I represented the Director of Intelligence at the Scotland Yard interview of these men by Sir Basil Thomson. Janssen was the first of the two to be brought in.

" I suppose you don't know a man named Roos ? " asked Sir Basil.

Janssen shook his head. " I have not even heard the name before," he said.

Sir Basil pressed a button on his desk. Immediately Roos was marched in. The two suspects started in surprise at the sight of each other. Their bluff had been called.

The apparently innocent orders for cigars wore a sinister complexion when codes found in the possession of the two men were deciphered. Every order that was telegraphed to Holland, it was revealed, contained secret information about the British Fleet. An order for ten thousand cigars from Portsmouth, for instance, meant that ten destroyers were lying in that port. Five thousand Coronas wanted by Newcastle meant the presence of five cruisers.

It was an ingenious code, and Roos and Janssen had between them managed to betray many important secrets to the enemy. After the Cannon Row interview, Roos attempted to commit suicide by jumping through the window of a taxi, and jagging his wrists in an effort to cut an artery. He was taken to Brixton Prison as a likely suicide and there recovered.

Both of these men were later sentenced to death and were shot at the Tower of London on July 30th, 1915. They met their end with almost as much courage as Casement. Janssen was the first to face the firing party, while Roos quietly smoked a cigarette and then faced the squad as if nothing mattered !

In the early days of August 1914 a certain Charles A. Inglis, who purported to be an American citizen, came into this country with an emergency passport from the American Embassy in Berlin, which

permitted him to travel anywhere in Europe. No questions were asked of this well-dressed and gentlemanly neutral, who wore clothes of definitely American cut and spoke with an American accent.

Inglis first came under observation through the discovery of a postal sorting clerk who in the course of his duties opened a letter of his addressed to Stockholm. The first glance at the contents showed that it was not an ordinary business communication, for not only was it written in German, but its first two words, which the clerk happened to be able to translate, struck him as suspicious. In addition to this communication, which was addressed to "Burchardt, Stockholm," there was another letter to "Stammer, Berlin."

The letters were handed over to the police authorities and translated. They confirmed every doubt that they had raised as to the bona fides of the sender.

One dealt with the alleged passing of Russian troops through England, and the other with a naval position in the North Sea. They were clearly the work of a spy.

Then began a game of cat and mouse. Detectives were set to work to track down and watch Inglis, and from town to town along the East Coast he was followed and his every activity noted. But Inglis, continuing the business which he, a "benevolent neutral," appeared to have to transact in every port, was for a long time unconscious that he was being remarked.

Suddenly he had a disturbing experience which put him on his guard. He had visited Rosyth, and there had noticed that two men were rather officiously interested in his movements. A little later he

ran into the two men again. Later still, when he reached his hotel, he found the same couple following him into the lounge.

Then he played a remarkably bold stroke. He went into police headquarters, sent in his card and asked to see the Chief Constable. The chief saw him and Inglis lodged a convincing complaint.

"I'm an American citizen," he declared indignantly, "and I wish to complain of inconvenience caused me by two men who appear to be shadowing me."

The police actually apologised, so confidently did the American acquit himself, and he walked out of the police headquarters with the assurance that he would have no further trouble of the kind.

Before long he came to London and began to inspect the preparations for the defence of the principal buildings. The special department at Scotland Yard picked up the scent again, and once more he was watched. He disappeared, and by the time he was traced to Scotland he had given his unwanted bodyguard the slip and was not found again for a little while. Suddenly he turned up in Liverpool, and with the Secret Service men dogging his heels he crossed to Ireland—with every appearance of being a well-to-do American tourist visiting Killarney. A few days later he was arrested.

The examination of the documents in his possession made Scotland Yard aware of the value of their capture. They had caught a master-spy. His documents have never been made public, but I am able to state that the secrets he had obtained concerning naval movements and dispositions would have been of priceless value to the enemy if he had not been

seized before, his investigations once completed, he had communicated them.

Mr. Charles A. Inglis was in actual fact Lieutenant Carl Hans Lody, a German naval officer. It was a chance meeting in London with someone who had known him well as Lody that put the authorities on his track once again after his neat trick had shaken them off at Rosyth. The marvel was that some such encounter had not been made earlier, for from his own account of his career it was clear that he must be known to many people in London and other parts of England.

He had, he said, enlisted in the German Navy in 1900 with the rank of lieutenant, was transferred after his first year's service to the Reserve, and went to America.

"I was at that time looking forward to making my home in the United States," his story ran, "and so I more or less cast off the ties which connected me with Germany. I was looking forward to becoming a naturalised American citizen, and I should have done so if my matrimonial relations had lasted. But unfortunately they didn't, and I dissolved my marriage and returned to Germany." His wife was an American belonging to Omaha.

When the Hamburg-America Line inaugurated a service of foreign personally-conducted tours from Berlin, Lody obtained the post of guide. His first job was to take charge of a party of rich Americans who were making a world tour, and from then on he made many journeys with tourists including England in their itinerary.

The thorough round-up of spies made in this country at the outbreak of War compelled Berlin to

find a first-class man to get news of our naval movements, especially of our naval losses and the manner in which we were making them good. Lody was chosen. One of his qualifications for this espionage work was his perfect English, spoken with an American accent, which successfully camouflaged him as a benevolent neutral. He would never say who was responsible for his appointment, but admitted that it was a person of great importance—someone of even greater authority than the Chief of the Berlin Bureau.

Before he was shot Lody revealed what his instructions from the unnamed High Personage had been. Briefly, his account ran :

“ Upon giving notice of my safe arrival in England, I was to remain until the first naval encounter had taken place between the two Powers, and then I was to give information of the actual losses amongst the British crews. After that I was at liberty to go to New York.

“ I must confess that I felt very uneasy when this work was explained to me. I felt that I was not as suitable a man for the job as the home authorities thought me. I am so well-known by hundreds of people in the travelling world on our many international routes. And I am so used to being called by my own name that I thought I was likely to blunder the first time I had to sail under a different flag in different surroundings. I knew I would be a bad man to disguise.”

The High Personage arranged that he should travel as an American, and in consequence of that he received an American passport.

The closing stages of Lody's trial by court-martial



Press Portrait Bureau

CARL LODY, THE GERMAN SPY (LEFT), IN THE GUISE OF A TOURIST



Exclusive News Agency

MATA HARI
The notorious spy

were particularly impressive by reason of the gallant demeanour of the spy. The only plea he would allow to be put forward on his behalf was that he came here in the service of Germany and solely actuated by patriotic motives.

"He came to this country," his counsel urged, "to fulfil the mandates of his superiors in whose service he was an officer. He wishes to go to his fate as a brave man, an honest man, and an open-hearted man. . . ."

And a brave man he undeniably was—a man who asked no mercy and faced his last moment with admirable courage and dignity.

He was the first German Secret Service agent to be shot in England.

One of Carl Lody's greatest friends was Trebitsch Lincoln, a man who before the War had had a career in responsible posts in this country, but who on the outbreak of hostilities developed a strong anti-British and revengeful feeling towards us. It was this emotion that drove him to turn traitor, and but for the alertness of our Intelligence Service and the work of 40 O.B. Lincoln's treachery would have had deadly results.

Lincoln was by birth a Hungarian Jew. He had in turn been a curate, a philanthropist's secretary, and a Liberal M.P. At the beginning of the War he was no longer in Parliament, but he was still a member of the National Liberal Club. He always suffered from a consciousness of race, despite his cleverness and its appreciation by his English colleagues, and he declared that he was deeply insulted in his club during the early days of the War. Apparently he made up his mind to get even.

"I made up my mind to shake England's dust off my feet," he afterwards stated. "I knew that what I was going to do was high treason. But my blood was boiling at all the calculated barbarities inflicted by a haughty perfidious race upon innocent people."

His scheme was to find out important military and naval secrets and betray them to Germany.

To get such information was a problem he at first tackled in the boldest and most obvious way. He tried to get employment in a confidential capacity at the War Office. He offered his services in turn to the Home Secretary, to Sir Edward Grey, and to Mr. Winston Churchill, but they were not accepted. Next he made a bid to get into the Counter-Espionage Department at the War Office. When that failed he devised a new plan.

For several weeks at the outbreak of war Lincoln had served as a censor of Rumanian and Hungarian correspondence at the War Office and the Post Office. He now applied to the officer under whom he had worked and from him obtained an introduction to an official of the Secret Service at the War Office.

Lincoln's extraordinary idea was that on a certain day a part of the British Fleet should be lured into a selected area of the North Sea and that the High Seas Fleet should be within easy distance. To this officer he cunningly proposed just the reverse of this snare, and he laid before him a carefully arranged schedule, which proved, ostensibly, the practicability of decoying and destroying part of the German Navy. All his schedule lacked for the complete success of the plan was the insertion of the battle stations of our Fleet. But the imperative secrecy

of these stations made any disclosure of them to Lincoln impossible, and his scheme was promptly rejected.

Lincoln's next move was to go to Rotterdam to obtain the information with which to gain the confidence of the Secret Service Department in London. 40 O.B. was quickly on his track. Indeed he kept 40 O.B. busy and excited for some time, for he had elaborate systems of codes for communicating with the Germans, and every day brought fresh disclosures of his double-dealings.

I give here some examples of his code systems and of the revelations he was making to the enemy by their means.

"Weber, Rotterdam. Best love to Mary, love to Alice, and fondest love to aunt in Rosendaal. Do write. . . ."

This meant :

"Weber, Rotterdam. Two *Lord Nelson* class battleships, two super-Dreadnoughts."

This was written in what Lincoln called the "family code." There was also an "oil code," of which the following is an instance :

"Sherensky, Rotterdam. Cable prices five consignments vaseline, eight paraffin."

This meant :

"Dover five first-class cruisers, eight sea-going destroyers."

Here are some words in the two codes :

FAMILY CODE	OIL CODE	MEANING
Alice.	Shale oil.	Super-Dreadnought.
Rose.	Vaseline.	First-class cruisers.
Father.	Paraffin.	Seagoing destroyers.
Utrecht.	Can you deliver ?	Rosyth Naval Base.

There was also a dictionary code made out in numbers. When deciphered a message :

92-02 70-019 140-07 217-033 124-026 91-13 93-15
was discovered to mean :

“ Four divisions new troops leaving for France.”

The explanation of this code is that the first figure refers to the number of a page in a dictionary, the second and third to the column and number of word in the column. Dummy words with no meaning would be added to give an appearance of plausibility to the figures.

Upon his return from Rotterdam, Lincoln got into touch at the earliest possible moment with the War Office. He had now obtained from the Germans documents and information with which he hoped to bluff the authorities into employing him as a trusted agent. He found the War Office representative at the War Office very keen to hear his story.

“ I went to Rotterdam because the British Secret Service would not employ me,” Lincoln told him. “ I have now obtained certain secret information that I think will prove my claim that I can be of real use to you.”

He then revealed that he was in possession of the code by which the movements of the British Fleet were being reported to Germany, the code used by German spies in England for transmitting messages to Holland, and a number of addresses to which letters and telegrams were being sent.

The upshot of this interview was that he was promised the kind of position he coveted in the Secret Service, though he was in reality suspected and was being deliberately put off. But as time

passed by and he heard no more about this post he began to feel uneasy lest he was being fooled. He decided therefore to precipitate affairs by a bold stroke—that of visiting Mr. Churchill in person to make a complaint about the delay.

When he reached the Admiralty, however, he was conducted not to Mr. Churchill but to Sir Reginald Hall, and was told that the Director of Naval Intelligence would deal with his case.

“Nothing has been done yet,” Admiral Hall told him, “except that a message has been sent to Holland to the German Consul pretending to come from you and telling him to be patient as things are going very well.”

The Admiral’s quick judgment noted that this explanation brought a momentary look of suspicion to Lincoln’s face, and as soon as the latter left the office orders were given that he should be closely watched in case he should attempt to leave the country. Afterwards I learned that this had indeed been his intention.

But the authorities took up the initiative quickly. By arrangement a letter was sent to Lincoln from the War Office to the effect that his case had now been handed over to the Admiralty for action, and close upon this a telegram from Admiral Hall followed :

“Lincoln, Torrington Square, W. Please call and bring your passport. Director of Intelligence.”

This brought Lincoln to the Admiralty almost at the double. My impression of the man, seen as I showed him from the corridor into Admiral Hall’s room, was that he was an extremely self-assured person with a smile that probably covered a good

deal. His coolness under all circumstances was, I think, more or less genuine, and in this particular instance, though he must have known the importance of his business with the D.N.I., he was detached enough to notice two plain-clothes men in the corridor, to whom and myself he made reference in a book he published later in America.

Now Lincoln had at one time been employed by a well-known man to obtain material for a book on certain aspects of economics. He took the opportunity afforded by his privileges in this capacity to obtain money by forging his employer's signature to a money draft. Doubtless it had never occurred to Lincoln that this little peccadillo was known to the Naval authorities ; why should it be ? But in reality it was, and when he learned this from Admiral Hall the applicant for a post in the Secret Service must have realised that he was deemed unsuitable for such confidential work ! Faced by this discomfiting information it was useless for him to try to pursue his spying activities through these channels, and his quick brain must have been busy, even while he talked with Admiral Hall, in forming plans for a hasty departure from the country.

I learned that, as he asked for the return of his passport which was practically invalid, this was returned to him by the D.N.I., who realised that he could make no use of it beyond the following day.

He felt confident that the authorities would take care that Lincoln did not leave the country, but this time the spy slipped through and in a few days was on board the *Philadelphia* bound for New York. When he arrived there he communicated with the

German Secret Service and cabled by prearranged code to his friend Gneist, the German Consul at Rotterdam. Interception and deciphering by 40 O.B. of his messages told us of his further intentions. He placed himself completely at the disposal of Germany, and informed Berlin of all he had learned in London while he was in touch with the War Office. And one highly regrettable service he rendered the enemy was to give a fairly accurate description of the mobilisation of Kitchener's Army.

I learned afterwards Lincoln's own version of his final interview with Admiral Hall, and it utterly confirmed my impressions of his feelings at the time. He added that when he left the D.N.I.'s room he simply could not believe that he was free. He gloated over his outwitting of the authorities in escaping from the country.

"That night I took train to Liverpool and two days later I was on the Atlantic, laughing at the discomfiture of Scotland Yard and of Admiral Hall. I, a German spy, who had spent years studying the art of espionage, had escaped from the British, while my closest friend, Carl Lody, had been captured and shot in the Tower of London."

He had originally come to England, he also admitted, for the sole purpose of serving Germany.

"Damn England," he exclaimed. "I hate the country. Some day I shall see her a wreck and I shall rejoice to see it. Ten years hence, and Germany will have smashed the British Empire. Ten years is the utmost time that England has before her now.

"But the British have brains, and use them to bluff the world. They regard every nation and individual as tools to be used by them for their own

purposes. Once I thought them fools. But I was wrong, and they fooled me.

"In America, I flattered myself I could work for Germany against England, for I held papers concerning naval and military matters that would have condemned me if discovered. I knew the addresses of scores of agents in the United States, and I saw my course straight ahead."

The coolest demeanour I ever saw in any suspect when faced by Admiral Hall was that of an American youth named Mahan, who was arrested in 1915. This lad had in the early part of the year obtained a post as wireless operator on one of our ships on the East Coast. Although he was remarkably crafty and of a most disarming appearance, his commanding officer had reason to become suspicious of his intentions. The captain therefore communicated with the Intelligence Division, and as the sequel to his report a trap was planned for the boy. He fell into it, and we obtained documentary proof that Mahan was aiming at a career as a super-spy.

When he was brought before Admiral Hall, his extraordinary good looks impressed everyone—though later I heard from Scotland Yard that he certainly could not have taken a bath for years! His nerve was unusual. He betrayed practically no emotion of surprise or fear when the Admiral produced the incontrovertible evidence of his guilt, and when he was taken away from the Admiralty with the belief that he was to be shot at dawn his bearing was still quite composed.

Mahan was the son of respectable parents in the United States, and the news of his arrest naturally caused deep distress to these decent people, both of

whom were in poor health and ignorant of their boy's activities. The family got into touch with President Roosevelt, who made exhaustive enquiries about them, and finally cabled to the Admiralty pleading for mercy, chiefly on behalf of the parents, who were, he stated, entirely British in their sympathies.

Even at this early stage of the War the Allies were fully expecting the Americans to join them. The British Government therefore wisely decided to exercise the clemency asked for by Roosevelt. Mahan was allowed to return home to America on the President's assurance that he would be guarded from making any further attempts at espionage.

CHAPTER IX

ON a June morning in 1916 there took place one of the most amazing and dramatic trials on record—that of Sir Roger Casement, formerly a British Consul, who stood accused of treason before an overwhelming mass of evidence. Though the Casement affair aroused the interest of the whole world and will go down to history, the public has as yet no complete knowledge of the links in the chain which led to his arrest—links welded together by the discoveries of 40 O.B.

When war broke out Casement was in New York. No one suspected for a moment that this man, who was one of the most highly trusted and responsible servants of his country, was even then plotting against it. No one imagined that the man who in 1911 wrote a glowing letter of gratitude for his knighthood would repay his Sovereign with treachery for the honour conferred upon him. Then like a bombshell came the news that Casement was in secret communication with Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador to the United States at Washington. It was incredible. But it was not so incredible as the full facts seemed when they came to be revealed.

It became known that the Irish-American agitator, John Devoy, had been in touch with the German Embassy at Washington and had offered to stir up trouble in Ireland that would cause another distraction for England and consequently be of immense

service to Germany. The offer was quickly considered and accepted, and Devoy was given permission to draw upon German Secret Service funds. Next, our Secret Service agents sent us the information that Sir Roger Casement was in communication with Devoy and was about to leave for Europe on a secret mission. The combination of the two factors, his dealings with both Count Bernstorff and Devoy, threw a sinister light on Casement's activities.

News of his departure from New York for Berlin was therefore flashed to the Atlantic Fleet with instructions to intercept him.

His vessel was actually held up by an auxiliary cruiser on the search for him. But the officer who boarded her failed to recognise him among the passengers, and so Casement slipped through his hands, an error which changed the course of the lives of many people and, by leaving Casement at large, caused him to work out his own fate.

On November 2nd, he reached Berlin and at once got in touch with Zimmerman at the Foreign Office. There he made his astounding proposal to form an Irish Brigade from among the Irish prisoners of war. Armed and equipped by Germany this brigade, so ran his plan, was to effect a landing in Ireland and head a rebellion.

At first the scheme met with but a cool reception. But Casement's eloquence and sincerity at length prevailed, and a document purporting to be a treaty was drawn up setting forth the obligations on both sides. Then began the work of raising the brigade, a job which proved infinitely more difficult than Casement had ever anticipated.

After the retreat from Mons a good many Irish

prisoners were left in German hands. Casement worked hard to propagandise these, holding frequent meetings and also pleading the cause with individuals, but out of some thousands of prisoners he only succeeded in enrolling between fifty and sixty. The great majority remained uncompromisingly hostile to the proposal—a fact of which I later obtained first-hand evidence. The few who succumbed to the inducements offered to them were removed to a comfortable camp at Lossen, where they led a pleasant life decked out in picturesque green uniforms with gold harps on the collars.

All this, of course, was at the time unknown to the British Government. How we got to know the facts about Casement's treasonable intentions is one of the many strange stories of the War.

The Germans began to press him to get ahead with his plans for a rebellion in Ireland. He was then doubtful whether the time was ripe or not for a successful rising, and so he suggested sending a messenger to Ireland to learn the truth of the internal state of affairs there. Accordingly, he selected three Irish civilian prisoners at Ruhleben and secured their release. There is no doubt that they were intended as emissaries whose compliance he expected as his reward for giving them their freedom. News of their departure from Berlin was received by the Foreign Office, London.

Quite outside my duties at the I.D. some rather fortunate information came my way by chance. One Saturday night in January 1916 a telephone call from the Foreign Office apprised me of the somewhat sudden release of these prisoners.

As obviously it was not for nothing that these

men had been sent from Ruhleben, it was assumed that their mission had something to do with the state of Ireland and the prospects of a German invasion. An Admiralty car was placed at my disposal and rushed me to all the London termini, but there appeared to be no trace of them.

However, I found that the authorities at Harwich had failed to detain the men and had allowed them to proceed unchecked to their various destinations. This rather dashed me, until I remembered that one man's wife, who was of German birth, was interned at Preston. I hurried off to Preston, therefore, on the chance of catching him, and was informed by relatives that he had gone to Manchester where he hoped to get a post in the office of a well-known Sunday paper. And there I found him.

He was astonished to see me, but when I tried to draw him out on the subject of his experiences in Germany he became as mute as an oyster. For five solid hours I argued and pleaded with him. At last he said :

“ If the Government will pay me for my story I'll tell everything I know.”

“ I guarantee that,” I answered.

In London he told his story, and it proved sensational enough in all conscience. Knowing as we did nothing about Casement's activities and his green-and-gold army, what he had to tell caused considerable surprise, which was at first mixed with some incredulity, I imagine. However, his narrative was accepted, and the development of the Irish Brigade, through the weaning of the prisoners of war from their loyalty by the promise of their freedom and good food, was quickly grasped.

Germany's backing of Sir Roger Casement in this theatrical bid for the conquest of Ireland was a menace to be faced, and the Cabinet was acquainted with all the information that Admiral Hall could give them. The date of the proposed Irish rising was discovered, but there remained the all-important question of *when* Casement was to leave Germany. There was, as later events proved, very little that the ex-prisoner of war did not know about this movement, but of Casement's own personal plans he naturally knew nothing.

It seems incredible in retrospect that so efficient a Great Power as Germany was before the War should have relied upon such unsubstantial agents as at many times it was evident to our Secret Service that she did. On the whole, it is abundantly clear that the standard of intelligence and training of the Allied representatives was much higher than those whom the Central European Powers engaged in the difficult task of secret intelligence. Yet Germany had always boasted of her Secret Service, while we, with our temperamental dislike of subterfuge, made comparatively little use of this means until the conflict was actually upon us.

Meanwhile events were moving quickly in Germany. Tired of Casement's repeated excuses for postponing the rebellion until a more opportune time, the Germans by arrangement with John Devoy consented to send twenty thousand rifles and ten machine-guns in trawlers to Tralee Bay. This landing was arranged to take place on April 20th, and Devoy sent a special messenger to Ireland with instructions to arrange for the unloading of the cargo.

But of all this Casement was told nothing. He was ill in Munich at the time, and these plans were made behind his back. When he learned what was afoot he dashed back to Berlin to urge the German Admiralty to defer their plans until a later date when he would be more certain of success in Ireland. But the German Admiralty were firm in their decision to carry out the scheme, and, moreover, to compel him to keep to his earlier agreement, and he was informed that a submarine was under orders to take him and the Irish Brigade over to Ireland to start the rebellion. When he still pressed for more time he was threatened with denouncement as a traitor to the Irish cause and exposure on this score to John Devoy in America.

After that things moved swiftly for Sir Roger Casement. Till that time the German wireless had been silent about Casement. Then suddenly 40 O.B. received a message which showed that his departure from Berlin was imminent. This was a code signal for the hour of his sailing, and was intended for Devoy in America.

The signal "Oats" was to be given the moment the submarine left with Casement on board, but if there was any hitch or delay "Hay" would be the code.

Our excitement at the Admiralty may be imagined. Every day—indeed, every hour—we expected to get from 40 O.B. the deciphered message containing one or other of the significant words.

It came during one afternoon. It was the 12th of April. In the usual batch of wireless intercepts sent on from the East Coast and decoded in 40 O.B. was one containing the word "Oats."

Casement had set out on the journey that was to end on the scaffold.

In a wild, blustery dawn on Good Friday, April 21st, the submarine in which he had crossed the seas nosed her way slowly inshore to the west coast of Ireland near Tralee Bay. Into the tiny canvas boat that was lowered from her side tumbled three men, Casement and two "lieutenants" of the Irish Brigade named Monteith and Bailey. As they pushed off from the submarine a voice shouted in English :

"Is there anything more you want?"

"Only my shroud," Casement grimly replied, as the submarine swung round and made off.

Just off the shore the collapsible boat capsized in the heavy breakers, and Casement and his companions got an undignified wetting. On reaching land they parted company, Monteith and Bailey taking the road to Tralee whilst Casement stayed behind.

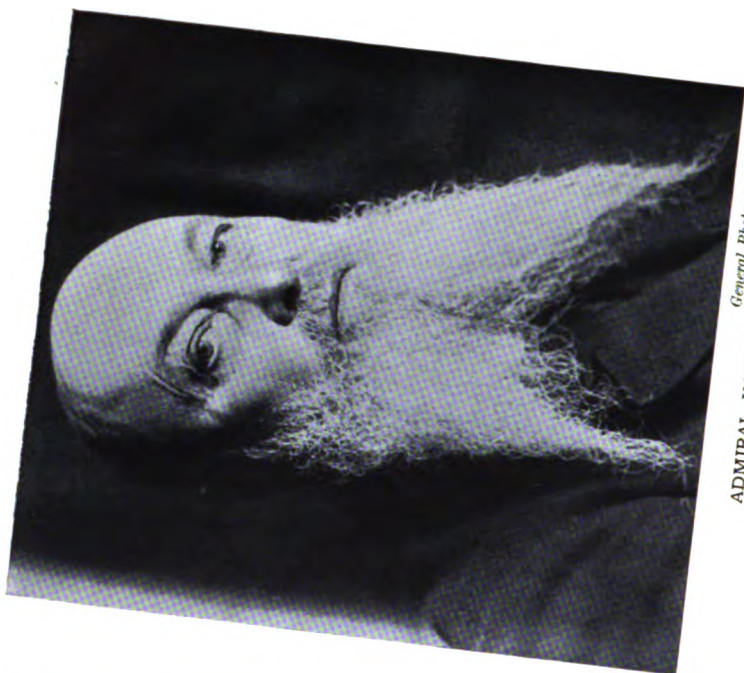
As soon as Monteith arrived in the town he made his way to a shop, apparently looking for somebody according to a prearranged plan. He asked if the commanding officer had come, was told that he had not arrived, and was bidden to come in and wait. Then the police challenged the pair, but though Bailey was arrested Monteith managed to make his escape.

Not long after the U-boat had landed the three conspirators, the British sloop *Bluebell*, patrolling near Tralee, sighted a suspicious ship off the coast flying the Norwegian ensign and with four Norwegian ensigns painted fore and aft on each side. The *Bluebell* signalled the mysterious vessel, who replied



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 German Foreign Secretary during the War.

that she was the *Aude*, bound to Genoa from Bergen, but the *Bluebell* was still suspicious and ordered her to follow into harbour.

At first she seemed to be obeying *Bluebell's* order. But when she was about a mile and a half from the Daunt Rock lightship a sudden puff of smoke was seen to come from the starboard side of the after hold. At the same time two German naval ensigns fluttered up to the mast-head and two boats were lowered.

Then there was a dull explosion, a vivid flash of flame, and the *Aude* began to settle down by the bows. She sank almost immediately. *Bluebell* fired a shot over the boats, and the occupants at once hoisted flags of truce and put up their hands. When they reached the *Bluebell* they were seen to be in German naval uniform.

The game was up, for the *Aude* was in fact the munition ship that the Germans had promised Casement, and whose fake cargo of timber concealed thousands of rifles and tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition.

The same morning the canvas boat in which the three men had arrived was found a few yards from the shore by John McCarthy, a local farmer, who discovered in it a dagger, while in the sand nearby was a tin box containing pistol ammunition. The police then searched the neighbourhood, and in what is known locally as McKenna's Fort they found Casement in concealment. Bailey had promised to return with a motor-car once he had established communication with the rebel associates who were expecting their arrival. But his arrest had prevented his return, and Casement, fearing to make a false

move, had no other course open to him but to wait.

Confronted by the police he remained quite calm. His name he gave as Richard Morton, of Denham, Bucks, and his occupation as that of a writer. However, on the way to Ardfert Barracks he made the fatal mistake of trying to rid himself of a secret code which he carried in his pocket. The code was picked up from the floor where he had thrown it, and upon examination was found to have in one column a list of cipher sentences with their corresponding translations. They read as follows :

Await further instructions.

Await favourable opportunity.

Send agent at once.

Proposal accepted.

Please answer by cablegram.

Have decided to stay.

Communication again impossible.

Railway communications have been stopped.

Our men are at . . .

Further rifles needed.

How many rifles will you send ?

Will you send plan about landing at . . . ?

Send rifles and ammunition to . . .

Preparations are made for . . .

Send more explosives.

Send another ship to . . .

Cannon and plenty of ammunition are needed.

Send them to . . .

In his admirable book, *Queer People*, Sir Basil Thomson describes his reception of the news of

Casement's landing. "On Saturday the 22nd," he says, "I was taking my turn of night 'Zeppelin duty' at Scotland Yard. At 10.30 p.m. my telephone rang and a voice said: 'You know that stranger who arrived in the collapsible boat at Currahane? Do you know who he is?' I said: 'You're joking!' 'I am not,' said the voice, 'and he will be over early to-morrow morning for you to take him in hand.' It was not necessary for either of us to give a name. We had been expecting Casement's arrival for many weeks."

Sir Basil Thomson expresses his belief—in which he is not alone—that before the War no disloyal thought had occurred to Casement, and it may be that his long foreign service in unhealthy climates had affected the Irishman's outlook. His departure from Ireland to America followed the speech he made in Northern Ireland of which his final emphatic words: "If all fails, you have got your own strong right arm," were a startling indication of a change of heart in the man.

Casement had been ill for some weeks before he was sent off in the submarine from Germany. His intention, according to his statement to Sir Basil Thomson in London, was to stop the Rebellion. Certainly the rising did not take place on the Easter Saturday for which originally it was intended. On that day a large cryptic advertisement in the Irish press announced that it had been put off and failed to give any clear hint as to when it would take place. However, the storm burst on Easter Monday, hurried on by the extremists in Dublin, who were unwilling to postpone the issue, in spite of Casement's unexpected arrest, and the

non-arrival of the promised German assistance. But no evidence could be produced later to support Sir Roger Casement's plea that he intended to prevent the trouble, and matters took their tragic course.

When Casement stood in the dock on trial for his life he learned that the full story of his disloyalty had been pieced together—a damning indictment.

He had always denied that it was he who wrote the extravagant letter of thanks for his knighthood. He accused one of his former friends of forging it. When this man visited him in prison, Casement said to him meaningly :

“ When I am dead I will appear on your bridge in my knightly armour at midnight and point the finger of scorn at a forger ! ”

The letter was in reality written at Casement's request, as he disliked putting pen to paper. But while in prison he wrote to the superintendent of Brixton Gaol one letter that revealed a side of the man which ought in all charity to be remembered in his favour.

“ DEAR SUPERINTENDENT (he wrote),

“ Before I have the misfortune, as I will term it in truth, to be taken out of your custody on my journeys to and from this prison to Bow Street, I want to thank you very warmly and sincerely for your unfailing courtesy, manliness and kindness to me.

“ From the time you took me into custody at Euston on Easter Sunday and again took me to the Tower on Easter Tuesday, you showed me the

best side of an Englishman's character—his native good heart.

"Whatever you may think of my attitude towards your Government and the Realm, I would only ask you to keep one thing in that good heart of yours—and that is, that a man may fight a country and its policy and yet not hate any individual of that country.

"Robert Louis Stevenson once said: 'An Irishman's hatred of England is natural, right and sincere. It is against a rule and a government and is not based on any personal end. It is impersonal and may be most unselfish.'

"I hope my feeling is something of that kind. At any rate I feel for you (and for so many others who have had charge of me since my arrest) that you have treated me in a wholly chivalrous and high-minded way, and I can only thank you from the bottom of my heart.

"Yours very faithfully,

"ROGER CASEMENT."

"P.S. I hope your life may be happy and prosperous, and that you will gain speedy promotion, and so be able often again to help some other man in great trouble."

While in prison Casement became a convert to the Catholic faith. Just after he met his death on the scaffold a remarkable letter came into my possession from the priest who blessed him a few moments before the execution, and in which the priest describes how he went to his doom. It was written to a close friend of Casement, who afterwards handed it to me. I may only quote parts of it :

" DEAR SIR,

" I know you will be glad to learn that your friend Roger Casement was reconciled to the Church and made his first confession on last Wednesday evening. . . . He died with all the faith and piety of an Irish peasant woman, and had, as far as I can judge, all the dispositions, faith, hope, charity and contrition, resignation to God's will . . . to meet his Creator.

" He marched to the scaffold with the dignity of a Prince and towered straight as an arrow over us all. He feared not death and he prayed to the last. He sobbed like a child after his Confession, and his contrition for any sins he may have committed was intense. . . . "

Thus, fortified by the rites of the religion he had embraced, Roger Casement died at Pentonville on August 3rd, 1916. He was fifty-two years old, an age at which many a man has sacrificed many things for an obsessing idea—and Casement sacrificed all for his own obsession, his dream of winning independence for Ireland.

His mad scheme had throughout the two years of his plotting brought him little but thwarting and indignities. It fell to my lot to hear a first-hand account from a former member of Casement's Irish Brigade—a prisoner who had remained in Germany after the Irish leader left the country on his last wild escapade. This fellow—I will call him O'Brien, withholding his true name in consideration for his living relatives—had been won over to " the cause " by the enticements of food and comfort offered to him, a mouth-watering prospect after the appalling

privations of prison-camp life. But, he said, Casement's proposition was highly unpopular with the Irish prisoners.

"One day," he continued, "Casement was speaking a few words to a group of us, beseeching us to be what he called 'true patriots,' and one tough chap walked up to him and hit him on the mouth with the back of his hand. 'That's what we think of you and your true patriots,' said this Irish lad. And the whole lot of them hissed Casement till he had to give it up for that day."

How O'Brien himself came to be in our hands is another story of the amazing workings of 40 O.B.

40 O.B. intercepted a message from the German Foreign Office in Berlin that was being sent to the Irish agent in America, John Devoy. When decoded it proved to be an advice note stating that an emissary was being sent to Ireland to find out the true state of affairs with a view to fomenting a rebellion against the English. No further details were given, and the Irish Intelligence was warned to be on the alert.

A few days later the officer in charge of Intelligence in Ireland rang up Admiral Hall with a strange story.

"We have arrested a man who says he has been submarined just off the coast," he told the Admiral. "The strange feature is that no wreckage of any sort has come ashore. I think you ought to interview the fellow, so he is being sent over to London under escort."

Before the man arrived the actual facts of his landing in Ireland were sent on to the Admiralty.

At dawn one morning some fishermen from a

harbour on the Galway coast saw a small object moving about a quarter of a mile from the coast. On longer inspection it appeared to be a tiny canvas boat with a single occupant. As they watched, the heavy swell caught the tiny craft broadside, tipped it over, and plunged the oarsman into the sea. Perhaps fortunately for him he was near a tiny islet, to which he half swam, half waded, and on which he reached haven. Then he waved a white handkerchief for assistance.

The fishermen went out to him.

“What brought you here?” they asked.

The man’s story was that he was washed ashore and that the boat broke to pieces and was carried away by the tide. On being landed by the fishermen he presented them with five shillings. A coast watcher, Macnamara, however, met him on the pier and asked him for his authority for landing. He explained that he had been shipwrecked from the ship *Mississippi* which, he said, had been torpedoed off the coast at half-past nine the previous night.

Macnamara took him to the coastguard station where he gave the name of James O’Brien. From there he was passed on to Ennistimon and thence to a senior officer at Galway.

Police officers hurried down to the shore to look for possible survivors of the *Mississippi*. But no survivors were to be seen, nor was so much as a spar of wreckage to be discovered.

Twenty-four hours later O’Brien reached London to be taken before Admiral Hall. I remember the strange group I saw in the passage waiting to enter Admiral Hall’s room. Between two soldiers with

fixed bayonets, with two detectives from Scotland Yard hovering close by, stood a bare-headed and, I thought, foreign-looking man, pathetically unkempt and dirty in his stained suit of mufti. When I preceded them into the room, the D.N.I. smiled at me with a knowing wink, and then ordered the party to come in. The prisoner entered between the soldiers, who dropped their rifles with a bang and stood to attention while the prisoner gave a smart military salute. The guard were then told to retire to the corridor, and the pathetic-looking wretch remained standing with the light of the high windows exposing remorselessly every flicker of expression on his face.

But his appearance was a surface illusion. There was nothing pathetic about the man himself; he was completely self-possessed and assured.

"How did you come to land on the coast of Galway?" the Admiral opened abruptly.

"I was a passenger on a South American liner from Buenos Aires," he answered. "She was torpedoed by a German submarine and I am the only survivor."

He elaborated the account he had given to the fishermen, giving explicit details of the voyage—the date of the vessel's departure from Buenos Aires, the names of her officers, incidents on board ship, her escape from one submarine which had been scared away by a destroyer. He made a graphic picture of the final scene—the conning tower that nosed out of the sea off Galway, the shouts of alarm aboard the liner, the attempt to train the small gun with which she was armed, the inevitable thud.

"They didn't give us a chance," he said. "The

torpedo struck us amidships, and the vessel sank before we had time to launch the boats."

Admiral Hall listened quietly. On his desk was a list of the ships that had been sunk by the enemy during the preceding seven days. In it was the very ship in which O'Brien declared he had travelled, and this ship had been sunk several hundred miles out in the Atlantic two days before the time O'Brien gave.

When he came to the end of his narrative the Admiral looked him in the face steadily for a moment. Then he said suddenly :

" You know that's all a lie ! "

O'Brien clicked his heels together in a smart salute, and without a sign of discomfiture replied boldly :

" Yes, sir. All of it, sir."

I have to admit that at this startling anti-climax everybody broke into laughter.

" Now," said Admiral Hall, " if you will tell the truth to a fellow-countryman of yours, I will promise you your life."

" I will," said the man. " I did land from a German submarine, but I'm not a traitor. I was bluffing the Germans all the time."

He was then turned over to me in order that I might see what I could get out of this fellow-countryman of mine. He had been, I learned, a lance-corporal of the Connaught Rangers, and had been taken prisoner in the retreat from Mons. James O'Brien was not his real name. In Germany he had become one of Casement's Irish Brigade who had remained over in Berlin after Casement left in 1916. He had been sent over to make a

report of the general position in Ireland, which the German General Staff were extremely anxious to learn.

"The arrangement was that I was to stay in Ireland for two weeks," he said. "Then I was to go to the coast again and wave a white handkerchief as a signal for a submarine to take me back. If I hadn't got caught," he added, "I'd have got in touch with John Redmond."

He was astonished when I informed him that John Redmond was dead, but was not in the least taken aback.

"Well, then, I'd have seen John Dillon," he substituted.

I told him that John Dillon had nothing whatever to do with the Irish Rebellion or the Sinn Fein movement.

Some days later he asked to see me again, perhaps because I had done him one or two little services such as writing to his mother. This time a dictaphone was arranged in Scotland Yard, Sir Basil Thomson and Admiral Hall listening in another room. But when he was marched in O'Brien spotted the dictaphone at once.

"Clever, but it doesn't fool me," he said.

He was subsequently sentenced to death by court-martial. However, as Admiral Hall had promised him his life on condition that he spoke the truth, the sentence was not carried out.

O'Brien considered that he would be shot quite justifiably as a traitor and for his attempted assistance to the enemy by visiting Ireland in the submarine. He gave me the impression that he would like to die the death of a martyr. In one of his letters to his

mother (which we arranged should not be censored) he said :

“ I am in the hands of the enemy who caught me in an attempt to strike a blow for Ireland.”

But we were able to comfort his old mother and sisters by advising them that the death sentence would not be carried out. O'Brien served a long term, but upon representations from the Irish Government he was eventually released and sent home to his native land.

Incidentally it may be told that we took good care to utilise his information about his arrangements with the German submarine. At the end of the fortnight he had specified a white handkerchief was waved off the coast of Galway. A U-boat came to the surface and approached the shore. But when she was close in two aeroplanes promptly appeared on the scene, and bombs, I was informed, put an end to that German mission.

From O'Brien I learned many things about Casement's Irish Brigade drawn from Irish prisoners in Germany. He told me how upon one occasion certain Irish prisoners were brought before Casement to state whether they were prepared to join the Brigade or not. After each refusal a shot was heard outside. This attempt at terrorism had little or no effect upon the others, however, for very few promised their allegiance, and afterwards they discovered that not an Irish soldier had been shot !

At an earlier period than this, the German General Staff had thought it a good idea to arrange for an Irish Dominican Father to address the Irish prisoners, which they believed he might do in such a way as

subtly to influence them to become traitors. The meeting was arranged, and General Ludendorff was present. One can only imagine what his sentiments may have been when he listened to the Dominican Father's concluding words :

“ I know nothing about their *gessel* or their *schaft*, but I do know that you have taken an oath to your King and country—and by that you are bound.”

CHAPTER X

ONE of the earliest spy discoveries in which 40 O.B. was involved was that of a Norwegian whose real name was Alfred Hagn. The decoding of a wireless message revealed that a man of this name had left Holland for England, and though nothing was added to this intercept that gave any hint of his purpose in coming here, the worst construction was naturally put upon it. The man's name already figured in our card-index. All that we actually knew, though, was that he was a Secret Service agent. Admiral Hall, on being shown the wireless message, immediately requested Scotland Yard to arrest him as soon as his boat reached Harwich. He proposed to act on the theory that prevention is better than cure.

However, when his instructions were received at the Yard, a detective-inspector came straight up to the Admiralty to see Sir Reginald.

"We suggest that it would be more useful to let him have a start before arresting him," he said. "He probably has associates here, and if that is so then we have an opportunity of discovering the whole organisation."

"Go ahead then," said the Admiral. "But understand, he must not be lost sight of for a moment."

Hagn therefore was permitted to land at Harwich, and a more blameless-looking foreigner was never

scanned by the sharp eyes of the detectives who had been sent down to see him in. His papers were in order, and as far as the Harwich authorities were concerned there was nothing to prevent his continuing his journey to London under the accepted description of "benevolent neutral."

But the Scotland Yard men who shadowed him to the train and watched him both there and at the station did not fail to notice that he never let his luggage out of his sight. He was especially solicitous about one suitcase in particular, and the detective who travelled to London in the same compartment with the unwitting Norwegian reported that this piece of his baggage was handled as if precious, and that no porter was permitted to touch it.

"Leave that. I'll see to it myself," Hagn interposed when a porter attempted to add it to his load.

The detective's taxi followed that of Hagn to the Savoy Hotel, where the Norwegian engaged a room under a Dutch name. The detective secured a room for himself on the same floor, and at once hatched a simple scheme for scraping acquaintance with the spy.

In the bar, under the guise of a half-drunken breezy fellow who was in the mellow state of regarding all within range as friends, he accosted Hagn, drew him into the round of drinks, and forced him into the general conversation in a manner which made it difficult for the spy to refuse. The talk was easily led round to the War.

"You're a neutral, of course?" the inspector said to the Norwegian.

"Yes, I'm Dutch."

"Here on business, eh?" continued the Scotland Yard man affably.

"What business it is possible to find these days."

"Yes," replied the detective, "the War has certainly ruined a good many. I suppose it hits you too?"

Hagn burst into assumed rage. "These German swine have taken almost everything from me. I had a prosperous cigar business in Liège before the War, and now it is completely scattered."

After this opening the inspector pursued the acquaintanceship to such purpose that soon he and the Norwegian were frequently dining and visiting theatres together. After some days had passed he had discovered nothing of note about Hagn save the possibly unimportant fact that he was keenly interested in the topography of London. He apparently had no friends. When this slow progress was reported to Admiral Hall, who was on tenterhooks lest the spy should slip through their fingers, he told the detective that it might be better to put him under arrest at once. But the detective asked for a few more days. Always at the back of his mind was the thought of the suitcase which had been so carefully handled.

It would of course have been possible to search Hagn's room at any convenient interval during his stay, but it was imperative that he should have no suspicions that he was being watched, or his property tampered with.

The Scotland Yard man then arranged a cunningly disguised trap. Meeting the spy in the lounge he suggested that he might stroll over to the post office with him and drop into a new cocktail bar that he

had just discovered. Just as they were leaving the hotel, the detective was, by previous arrangement, detained by a call-boy to answer a telephone call.

"A nuisance!" he exclaimed to Hagn. "I wanted this telegram to go off immediately."

"But that's all right," Hagn said. "I'll take it along and you catch me up at the post office."

"Thanks. I'll be with you in a few minutes."

The moment Hagn had left the hotel Scotland Yard men hurried to his room and made a systematic search of his belongings. The result was startling. The suitcase revealed the materials of a fiendish plot, as later examination of them proved. Photographs were taken of the contents, phials, packages and documents, and were rushed to the Yard for immediate development, and then the detective-inspector joined the impatiently-waiting Hagn at the post office.

An hour or two later they returned together to the hotel. A Scotland Yard officer was waiting there with a warrant for Hagn's arrest, for the examination of the documents had conclusively exposed the alarming business which had brought him to England.

In one of the phials enough germs were housed to kill thousands of people! The neat little packages in the suitcase contained enough high explosive to reduce a large part of London to ruins!

Hagn's interest in London was explained. His purpose was to poison the reservoirs with the poisonous cultures, and to blow up vital centres in the London area. A more deadly weapon put into the hands of one man was never discovered.

When brought up for trial the spy was convicted

on overwhelming evidence. Asked if he had anything to say against the death sentence being passed on him, he coolly replied :

“ All I can say is, I’ll be damned. To think that that charming Irishman was a detective ! ”

The death sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life. After two years of good behaviour at Maidstone gaol the prisoner went on hunger strike, and in 1919 was sent back to Norway on his promise never to return to this country.

I regard this Hagn incident as one of the starkest proofs the Admiralty ever had of the incalculable value of the combined work of the listening stations and the decoding department, 40 O.B. But for the interception and deciphering of that wireless message, Hagn would have had his chance of attempting his deadly purpose. The imagination fails when one tries to picture the widespread suffering and damage that his poisons and explosives might have caused.

One of the most notorious spies in whose ill-fated career the Naval Intelligence Department was to have a hand was Marguerite Zelle, popularly known as Mata Hari.

Mata Hari began her career long before the War as a cabaret dancer in Paris. Her vivid beauty, with her olive skin, large dark eyes and superabundant vitality, made many men her easy conquests, and she was known to exploit the wealthy among her admirers for her own purposes. From them she acquired not only money and jewels, but a certain accepted position in the capitals of Europe. Incidentally she learned many things from her highly-placed friends. Secrets of international diplomacy came to her ears, and she was not slow to realise that these

might be worth a big purchase price to interested Powers.

She approached Germany, who, realising the value to them of her cleverness combined with her unusual charm, began to employ her in intrigues, and soon regarded her as one of their most trusted agents. In the spring of 1914, while visiting the headquarters of the German Secret Service in Berlin, she met the Crown Prince, who, appreciating her attractiveness, invited her to the Army manœuvres about to open in Silesia. There was a festive party in the Crown Prince's quarters on the last day of the manœuvres, and Mata Hari made a sensational hit among the gay crowd by performing a dance for them for which she wore a daring costume as a harem slave.

Gossip about this incident reached the ears of the Kaiser, who took a firm line in the matter and ordered the Espionage Bureau to send her from the country to perform her duties as their spy elsewhere. Within a few hours she received instructions to leave Germany for the purpose of carrying on secret investigations in France and England.

Soon after war broke out she was discovered to be in France. As her international repute was none too good she was watched, and though nothing could be proved against her she was finally arrested on suspicion, and brought up before the head of the French Army Intelligence Service. She was told that she was suspected of spying on behalf of the Germans and that she would be deported to Holland forthwith.

Mata Hari protested that she was not in the pay of Germany.

"I am willing to work for France," she declared.
"I will show you. Send me to German General

Headquarters at Stenay and I will bring you information."

"Very well," she was told. "We will try you. Work faithfully for us, and we will pay you well. Fail us, and you will be shot."

She was sent to Spain *en route* for Holland and Germany. From Vigo she sailed for Antwerp which was of course then occupied by the Germans. But a British patrol held up the ship in the English Channel and discovered her presence on board. Admiral Hall received a wireless message asking for instructions for dealing with this traveller.

Now the Intelligence Department, though it knew nothing of Mata Hari's employment by France, did know a great deal about Mata Hari, and the fact that she was on her way to Germany tallied with our previous information about her. Admiral Hall therefore promptly replied by ordering Mata Hari to be brought into England and sent to Scotland Yard for interrogation.

When she was faced by Sir Basil Thomson she was clever enough to realise that here was a man on whom her usual technique of feminine wiles made no impression whatever. She became serious and to some extent frank.

"I will confess it—I am a spy. But it is for the French, not the Germans, that I do it."

And she told a long story of her adventures, with cunning omissions, which tallied with what Scotland Yard already knew of her intrigues. When she had finished Sir Basil said :

"Take the advice of one who is much older than yourself and give up what you have been doing."

"I will," she responded. "You can trust me."

But this promise went the way of her promise to France !

In Spain, to which she was returned on the instructions of Sir Basil Thomson, she exhausted her funds. Now the luxurious tastes of Mata Hari were stronger than either her word or her fear of danger. She must have money. She judged that her most easily realisable asset was the valuable information that she had picked up in Paris, and this she took to the German Military Attaché with the prospect of thus replenishing her money. The Attaché sent a code wireless message to German G.H.Q. asking for instructions for H 23, the number by which Mata Hari was referred to in their espionage organisation.

This wireless message, which was sent by the woman's own suggestion, was the fatal move of her new game. For the immediate wireless reply ordering H 23 to return to Paris and collect five thousand francs placed to her credit in a certain French bank did not, as it purported to, come from the Germans. The Attaché's wireless had been intercepted by the French.

Mata Hari walked into the Paris bank—and into the trap. She found herself confronted by police officials, who promptly arrested her. The game was up.

The story of her courageous end, when she waved her gloves and threw kisses to the firing-party whose rifles were levelled at her breast, is now well known. Wide propaganda was carried on by the Germans in view of the fact that a woman had been shot by their enemy the French, just as in England powerful anti-German feeling was emphasised by the execution of Nurse Cavell. The English conscience is clear in

that regard, for no woman spy was put to death by us.

One very interesting case of suspected espionage was eventually used by our own authorities with great advantage to ourselves. The man in the case was a very odd customer indeed.

This fellow was in the course of the War discovered by the operations of 40 O.B. to be in German pay in various countries, and a tab was kept on his movements under his card-index designation as "X." In Mexico and the United States he was engaged in all sorts of dirty international work, and was directly in touch with von Eckhardt, the German Minister in Mexico, and Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador at Washington.

Towards the end of the War "X" was reported to be on his way to London. Through 40 O.B. his intentions were more than suspected, but it seemed wiser to let him land here rather than refuse permission and so leave him still at large to serve Germany. When he arrived at Southampton, therefore, he was shadowed by Scotland Yard detectives who followed him to town and kept all his movements there under observation. He was not a German so there was no possibility of interning him.

Early one morning the telephone rang from the War Office, and the Director of Naval Intelligence was asked if he could release me for an hour. The reason was not explained, but I was to meet a Secret Service official outside the Law Courts. When I arrived he led the way up some dingy stairs to a barrister's chambers. There before me was a trembling man whose eyes, when I entered the room, fell on me with a glance of surprised recognition. He was a

man I had encountered in South Africa before the War, named—with ironical suitability—Kraft, and I could see that my appearance did nothing to still his frightful nervousness, which was that of a man condemned to be shot at dawn. We did not speak, but I realised that the Kraft of Johannesburg and “X” of 40 O.B.’s records were one and the same.

In the office were also representatives from the War Office and the Admiralty, who cross-examined Kraft ruthlessly until the big, flabby fellow was reduced to a pulp and had to be given brandy to steady his nerves. Gradually the true story of his activities was wrung out of him. He had been acting in Mexico as a paid agent of Germany with the object of starting trouble there, just as Germany was trying to raise disturbances in many parts of the world outside her own territory. The movement in Mexico was a failure, and Kraft was next scheduled for India, where he was to head a disruptive organisation for spreading German propaganda. He was of no real nationality, and we soon realised that his motives were solely guided by the urge for money. The highest bidder could buy this bounder.

It did not take very long to demonstrate to Kraft where his interest lay. Before the interview was over he had readily promised to put his knowledge at our disposal and serve in India on our behalf instead of that of his original employers, whose payment we undertook to outbid. His terror of the fate that threatened him in England and his cupidity combined to put him into our hands.

To make doubly sure that he carried out his contract a naval officer in mufti accompanied him to India, where he learned all the movements of the

revolutionaries and reported them to the Admiralty Intelligence Division. His services were of the greatest use to us in checking the German trouble in India.

Somehow I felt a little sorry for Kraft that morning when I saw him in the office like a frightened animal in a cage. Perhaps it was because in my casual knowledge of him in South Africa he had seemed such a resourceful, if callous, dare-devil. He had, I believe, been in the shipping business during the Boer War and had made a great deal of money, which he lost afterwards by backing his own dubious horses. He stopped me, I remember, one day in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, and told me that he had an "absolute cert" at Auckland Park the next day. I gasped when he named the horse, for the animal had a reputation among knowledgeable people of disliking the starting-gate, and had been known to turn round several times in a five-furlong race. But Kraft swore that nothing but an earthquake could beat his horse.

The bookmakers offered a hundred to one with only eight runners! There was a sudden rush of money, and surprisingly enough the horse in no time became favourite.

I attended that particular race-meeting. There was considerable delay at the start and then the starter came back on his hack to consult the stewards. Something had evidently gone wrong. Another look through the glasses showed me that there was no starting-gate at the five-furlong post. However, the stewards decided that the programme must be adhered to, and as the only alternative they started the horses with the flag. Kraft's horse won in a canter.

A few days afterwards an advertisement appeared in the *Transvaal Leader* to this effect :

£500 REWARD

Will be paid to anyone who can supply information about the person or persons who sawed down the gate at Auckland Park early last Saturday morning.

That day I again saw Kraft. He was at the station *en route* for Cape Town, and he drew my attention to the advertisement.

"Some people," he said, "will stop at nothing !"

The scrutiny brought to bear on all persons entering this country during the War, meticulous though it was, was intensified during 1918. Germany was then at a low ebb and her psychological state was highly uncertain. It became then more than ever imperative that she should know the comparative condition of England, and our Intelligence Department knew that she was sending cunningly disguised investigators into the country.

Among those whom in this latter stage we were watching with suspicion was an aged gentleman named O'Connor. This Irishman had been until recently interned at Ruhleben, where he had remained since the outbreak of war, and naturally his return at this juncture seemed to need considerable explanation.

O'Connor could speak practically every European language and was widely travelled, prime assets for Germany's enquiry campaign. He had, moreover, a sum of £5000 or so in his possession, and on the face of it this was a remarkable state of finance for a man who had spent three and a half years in

internment at Ruhleben ! These two facts, which were highly suspicious in conjunction, had been reported to us, and in due course he was summoned to Scotland Yard for interrogation by Sir Basil Thomson.

The outward appearance of this venerable gentleman was certainly altogether in his favour. One could not help thinking that if he were indeed one of the enemy's paid agents, then the Germans had been remarkably clever—or perhaps remarkably lucky, according to the point of view—in selecting this particular man for their mission. For O'Connor had an air calculated not only to disarm mistrust but even to command respect. His shrewd eyes, well-kept, silky-white whiskers, elegant manner of wearing his clothes, however shabby, and his general look of distinction and culture were highly unlikely to suggest that here was a traitor to his country, though obviously no better type of agent could be found to inform the enemy concerning the morale of Great Britain during these dark days.

But all this was illusory, though surprises were to come. Later on, when a considerable amount of information had been gleaned about this man, it proved that he had been released from Ruhleben because “ the Germans got tired ” of him, to quote his own casual explanation. Small wonder, perhaps, when the adventurous career whose story was eventually pieced together was taken into account. For O'Connor was one of the world's most accomplished experts in the dubious science of card-sharping, and apparently had kept himself in good training—not to mention in pocket—during his internment in Ruhleben. His normal financial profits during this

time must have been considerable if the £5000 he landed with could be taken as a gauge.

This large amount, the possession of which had aroused the first suspicions concerning the purpose of his return to this country, represented his winnings—or, as he preferred to express it, his earnings—not as might be supposed from the whole three and a half years spent in the internment camp, but from a four hour game of poker with a group of German officers at Hamburg. He had taken the first opportunity of exchanging his marks for a more reliable currency as he passed through Holland on his way here.

He spun many a yarn about the gambling proclivities of the officers of the German Army, to whom he had applied his favourite maxim of “all’s fair in love and war.” For this attractive old adventurer prided himself on his “honourable” selection of his victims. It was certainly true that at that time few German officers could resist the lure of card-playing for high stakes, and my own memories include those of certain incidents in German South-West Africa, where I have known a German officer of high rank to lose his all and then continue to play enthusiastically, offering his Prussian greatcoat as security for a further debt.

Whether the great German General Staff really thought that Ruhleben was better off without the misapplied talents of our friend or whether they had hoped to secure his services as an enquiry agent following his return to England I do not know. If the latter, then they had certainly backed the wrong horse, for he was ardently loyal to us, and was both willing and anxious to tell us anything that might be of use.

As for Scotland Yard, it was soon found that they were on a false scent in following up their natural suspicions that he might be an enquiry agent for Germany, but for various reasons it seemed wise that he should be kept under observation, and arrangements were made to this end, with the result that he proved later to be in many ways a useful point of reference.

Incidentally, his attitude in regard to his standard of living was mildly amusing to us who were at that time feeling the utmost stringency of life that the War had yet imposed upon us. What was found on him when he arrived in England, the proceeds of his game of poker, was admittedly his own. It was suggested to him that this might be so handled that he should live upon £500 a year until the end of the War. He was highly aggrieved and said :

“ What a ridiculous sum to expect a *gentleman* to live on ! ”

He argued that to begin with he must have a new wardrobe (though he was extremely well-dressed at that moment), that he could wear no hats but Henry Heath's, no suits save from Bond Street, and so on, and added as a triumphant conclusion that he had been a great personal friend of the late King Edward's. Anyhow, the projected allowance was augmented.

Mr. O'Connor was one of the most interesting people with whom it was my fortune to come into contact during the War. I learned a great deal of his past history from Sir Basil Thomson, who of course had his career at his fingers' ends.

The Irishman, though originally trained for the

priesthood, had early drifted into other channels of life, and finally developed into one of the world's most expert card-sharpers. When he spoke to me about his skill in this dubious science, it was with an old man's complete disregard of exposure and childlike pride in his past successes. He could, he said, make a card "speak in any European language."

His fingers were certainly deft beyond belief. I saw him give two or three exhibitions of his skill in front of Sir Basil Thomson, and was dumbfounded. He could throw out four aces in nearly every case in a game of poker, and if he did make a mistake, well, then you got three !

Sir Basil told me that O'Connor—whom I think he liked and who had never to my knowledge been caught by Scotland Yard—had made his headquarters at Monte Carlo. His "big game" was the American visitor. He never took advantage of Colonials or foreigners, through some strange motive of his own which he obeyed scrupulously.

He made one of his biggest coups on his arrival in Monte Carlo, again at American expense.

He was wheeled about in a bath-chair for some days, posing as an invalid. He became a little better in health ! Some Americans then suggested a game of poker. It cost O'Connor £1000, which he duly paid in cash. The next night he was again invited to join in a game, but this time he refused on the score of being short of ready money. The next evening a telegram was exposed in the hotel rack addressed to him as the *Rt. Hon.* James O'Connor. This wire had been handed in at Dublin, and he made its contents known to his

poker-playing acquaintances. It ran more or less like this :

“Owing to the disturbances in Ireland we strongly advise you to accept £250,000 in settlement of your estates in Ireland.”

He and the Americans discussed this negotiation from every angle of the current situation in Ireland, and the latter strongly advised O'Connor, against his own inclination, it would appear, to close with the offer. O'Connor handed his wire of acceptance to a hotel employé before their eyes, and that night there was another game of poker !

This time the Americans lost £35,000. Net profit to O'Connor so far—£34,000.

O'Connor received the money with the cynical remark :

“Well, in Chicago you make millions of dollars out of pork.”

Some of his biggest scoops had been made on the American liners. He told with a sardonic grin of the winnings made by himself and his associates, actually seated at tables immediately beneath the boldly displayed notices which warned voyagers to “beware of card-sharpers.” I imagine it would be difficult for even the canniest traveller to be on his guard for very long with this genial personality. Friendly advances on his part were probably welcomed as a gratifying compliment, for not only was his mind stored with a fund of vastly entertaining stories but he had a very real and serious interest in art, literature, music and history.

He cleverly exploited himself, his craft, and his knowledge of human psychology, and I gathered

from Sir Basil Thomson that he had made a fortune on these transatlantic voyages. Sir Basil, in fact, knew his man. Money had come so easily and plentifully to the cheery scamp that it meant little to him. For him "the play," to twist Hamlet's meaning, was "the thing," and the Commissioner judged—and rightly, as the event turned out—that O'Connor's treachery to the British could not be bought with millions of German marks.

O'Connor had learned to handle the German mentality for his own purposes when for a time he lived in Africa. Apparently the cosmopolitan fraternity of professional gamblers had pretty well exhausted the possibilities of South Africa by that time, and from Cape Town to Johannesburg the Dutch knew all about them. An American gang of card-sharpers had, in the early years following the South African War, established themselves with Cape Town as their headquarters, but had found it judicious to move further north. In German West Africa they found fruit ripe for their picking.

The German officers at Swakemund proved to be terrific gamesters. Stakes were high, and fortunes would be won and lost in a matter of minutes. Once a German was seized with gambling fever nothing would stop him, O'Connor said, and putting this knowledge to practical application, he had made some pretty coups during his forced stay in Germany. It is hardly to be wondered at that the Germans, as he himself said, "got tired of" him.

We were well aware that if he had broken his parole he would soon have ruined some of the war profiteers in the West End. He was a man of mis-applied talent, who caused us a great deal of thought

and discussion—which often ended in a consensus of opinion that he might have become as fine a Prime Minister as he had become a card-sharper ! He knew *Burke's Peerage* and the *Almanach de Gotha* from A to Z, and understood the world and its worldlings. But, he told us, the “ world of mugs ” was his chief concern.

CHAPTER XI

IT will be obvious to the reader that the eaves-dropping of 40 O.B. was bound to put the Intelligence Division wise to dubious occurrences in other parts of the world.

Before America entered the War in April 1917 the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty was in frequent communication with her regarding suspects and intrigues which threatened the security of America as well as the betrayal of the Allies. Both by information conveyed to us by our own agents and by 40 O.B.'s operations, we were in a position to give the United States first-hand warnings on several occasions.

Acting upon our information, the American police raided an office in Wall Street. This place was ostensibly an advertising agency, which gave a disarming appearance to the comings and goings of callers at these premises. The detective walked in and found the "manager" rapidly taking some documents from the office safe. He was quickly arrested, and the papers proved on even cursory inspection that he was in communication with Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador.

The man took a highly indignant line towards his questioners, and expressed vigorously his opinions that there was no justification whatever for his private office being raided. Count Bernstorff was approached, and his anger convinced the American police that our warning was based on a correct suspicion. Small

wonder, when the purport of the documents was fully comprehended.

These papers betrayed a scheme for the destruction of American munition works and ships by the use of various types of infernal machine. A complete organisation of men in German pay was traced. Bombs were to be obtained by any means possible, and any ships that were not German were to be regarded as potential prey. The German element in America was encouraged to commit these outrages in the interests of their Fatherland, according to the Prussian clause which pronounced :

“ International law is in no way opposed to the exploitation of the crimes of third parties (assassination, incendiarism, robbery, etc.) to the prejudice of the enemy.”

Timed bombs were to be concealed in vessels bound for Europe, and in spite of the discovery of the plot several cases of this description occurred. In May 1915, a fire which broke out on the *Bayropea*, a British merchant-ship running from New York to Havre, was traced to some small cylinders and a barrel of alcohol into which holes had been bored. A few weeks later a vessel arrived at Marseilles from New York, in the unloading of whose cargo several bombs were found, which fortunately had for some reason failed to explode.

Von Papen, the German Military Attaché, was known to be cognisant of these deeds, but the United States were at that time, of course, bent on maintaining diplomatic relations with Germany, and therefore did not take action. Von Papen was referred to in the wireless communications we intercepted as “ 7,000.” Some of the documents seized in New

York proved that he was in co-operation with a wily fellow named Koenig, who had an inventive scheme for disguising the appearance of bombs as hunks of coal, so that they might escape easy detection when placed in the holds of ships. Other inventions of a destructive nature were being sought, and a covering address was employed for the reception of such suggestions.

Another rather different sideline of the German Ambassador in America was the *Liebau Employment Agency*. For some time this concern operated in finding jobs for German, Austrian and Hungarian immigrants to the States, and its apparent innocence roused no suspicion in America until we received information which put the authorities on guard. It was then discovered that by placing workmen in the big munition factories the Agency were tapping a source of knowledge of what contracts were being carried out, whether work was being done on behalf of the Allies of the United States, and so on. It was then simple to put two and two together. By this means also many of the strikes were fomented that served to delay the sending of munitions to us.

It was natural that the general public of Great Britain should regard all neutral countries with a certain amount of suspicion, on the popular fallacy that those who are not with us are against us. Spain, perhaps, in especial, was talked of as a very dark horse indeed.

The position of Spain with regard to her war sympathies was peculiar. In the first place, she was systematically propagandised by Germany from the very outset of war. German interests were invested in numerous Spanish journals, in which by open or

veiled methods every possible link between Spain and Germany was demonstrated to the general reader. It was not, unfortunately, until the beginning of 1918 that Lord Northcliffe undertook the direction of British propaganda in foreign countries—an earlier campaign in which might quite conceivably have drawn Spain into the War in the Allied cause.

At the beginning of the War the Spaniards were faced by crafty reminders that, with Napoleon's memory still rankling, little love could be lost between themselves and the French nation.

The Potsdam army-training methods were greatly admired by the Spanish Army, who might be expected to see in German militarism an all-conquering force. A victorious Germany could not be quarrelled with unless Spain was prepared to face grave commercial risks.

France was portrayed in this propagandist press as an atheistical and dangerous nation, in the spirit if not in the letter opposed to the warm Roman Catholicism of Spain. And after America became a combatant, this same press ran pointed reminders of the recent strong feeling in the Spanish-American War.

But subtler forms of propaganda than newspaper innuendo were used. In pre-War days the aristocracy and plutocracy of Spain very frequently employed British governesses to educate their children—these more often than not hailing from Ireland, probably drawn from that country by the bond of a common religious faith. After war broke out this supply of governesses was checked at the source by the difficulty of obtaining passports from Ireland to Spain under wartime conditions. Quick to take

advantage of the opportunity, the German authorities pointed out to their home educational agencies that here in Spain was employment for many of their applicants—and little by little the well-to-do households of Spain took unto themselves teachers from Bavaria.

In 1918 when our need for counter-propaganda was at last realised to be imperative, this matter of placing governesses in Spanish families came under consideration. The Intelligence Division of the Admiralty decided to invite Lady Denbigh to organise the drafting of English girls to these posts in Spain, Irishwomen being out of the question at this critical period of our relations.

I was present when the idea was put before the Countess, and I remember how, although she promised to do her best in the matter, she could not resist the sly reminder :

“ It’s now 1918—surely a bit late in the day to think of this.”

Our “ card index ” in the Admiralty Intelligence Division included a pretty accurate list of names of our most important friends and foes in Spain and other neutral countries. In Madrid we had two staunch friends in King Alfonso and Count Romanones. King Alfonso’s mother was of Austrian descent, his wife an English princess : his position therefore was a delicate one. Politically it was complicated by the fact that Count Romanones, who at one time was in favour of Spain joining the Allies, was powerfully opposed in this attitude by Senor Antonio Maura. It was only the personality of the Spanish King that maintained a balance between all parties in his own country.

It was this personal quality alone that forestalled what might have been more than a nasty revolution in Spain at a time when we British were counting greatly on our transactions with the great Rio Tinto copper-mine, a source of supply equally valuable, of course, to Germany. With this in mind Germany carried on stealthy movements to bring about a revolution in Spain in the hope and belief, relying on support from the Spanish Army, that a Spanish-German alliance would result.

But here the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty stepped in. From one of our agents we learned of this impending *coup d'état*, and promptly acquainted His Majesty of Spain with all the available particulars.

He tackled the situation with his well-known courage and discretion. The leader of the proposed rebellion, quite unsuspecting that the King had got wind of his association with any such scheme, was bidden to the Royal Palace. With wine and cigarette and easy conversation about the European War it was simple for His Majesty to size up his guest. The talk drifted on, when suddenly the King remarked :

“ I want to be quite candid with you and your followers. If this revolution takes place I am *not* going to leave the country. Whatever the Army does, I myself will die fighting here.”

The man immediately resigned his leadership, and the revolution was nipped in the bud.

On the whole the general feeling of the Spanish people was neutral—they were content not to be involved in a European War, and saw no reason for taking sides. At the Admiralty we had strong reasons for our knowledge that the Army, and a great pro-

portion of the Navy, were in sympathy with Germany—rather as the enemy of France than of ourselves.

But when Germany began her policy of unrestricted submarine warfare the easy-going attitude of the people showed a change. Many Spanish lives were being lost through the devastating activities of the U-boats, and there passed between Berlin and Madrid daily explanations and apologies. One of these, a sample which was intercepted and came into our hands, was to this effect :

“ We apologise for the sinking of the Spanish ships, and we will make amends to the wives and families of those who lost their lives. This is an act of war.”

This communication was sent by the German Chancellor to Prince Ratibor at Madrid.

However, Germany's flagrant disregard for the waste of life and the economic loss she was causing to Spain were gradually bringing that country to the breaking-point. In the Intelligence Division, indeed, we were practically anticipating the news that she too had declared war when Berlin invented a crafty scheme which pacified the Spanish for the time being.

This was the opening-up and development of a huge new business. The whole fruit crop of Spain was to be purchased by Germany and preserved until the end of the War in factories to be erected in Spain. Millions of marks were guaranteed by the German banks, and the venture promised an access of prosperity to the Spanish people. As the industry progressed, by the way, German science found uses for every integral part of the fruits—even employing certain pips as cattle-food.

To us the irony of the situation lay in the fact that, while Germany was thus laying up for herself this Gargantuan store of fruit, her justification for the sinking of Spanish ships was that these were carrying contraband of war—in most cases, fruit!

This catch-as-catch-can game which the nations at war were driven to play in the matter of obtaining necessities from neutral countries was of course played by the British as well. I remember one exciting instance in which my department had a finger.

Wolfram, the somewhat scanty metal which is a constituent of certain kinds of steel, was particularly in demand by Germany for the manufacture of some death-dealing gun. The only likely source in Europe from which this might be sent to Germany was Spain, in the north-west of which this important mineral is found. The Admiralty in London learned through 40 O.B. that Prince Ratibor, at Madrid, had received orders from Germany to arrange for its transport. So we quietly watched and waited.

The purchase of the ore was transacted, and a Spanish ship chartered which, as the safest course, was to carry the stuff to Madeira. There a rendezvous was to be arranged with two first-class submarines, who were to take over the precious cargo and get it into German waters with all possible speed and secrecy.

The scheme promised well. There seemed little to threaten its success. But that little was the listening ear of which the enemy knew nothing—40 O.B.—which put it into our power to warn the French, so that they might waylay the Spanish vessel and prevent Germany from receiving her supply of wolfram.



Topical Press

THE KAISER WITH HIS STAFF DURING THE WAR



H.M. KING ALFONSO

Central News

Two possible methods of trapping her were discussed. One was to capture her when three miles out from Madeira, arm her with concealed guns and substitute a British crew, taking the Spanish sailors to Gibraltar to be held there as prisoners so that Germany could not learn what had transpired. The French suggestion was to let the Spanish vessel depart after her cargo had been transferred to the German submarines, upon which destroyers, until then hidden behind Madeira, should pounce.

The latter scheme met with most favour.

Daily, then, we expected to learn from the wireless intercepts the name of the ship, day and hour of her departure, and that the rendezvous was unchanged. But in the middle of all this expectation, I was unfortunately very ill, and it was only by luck that I picked up the thread again.

My first visit to the Admiralty following this illness occurred one Sunday morning, when on my arrival at the office I found that Admiral Hall had also gone off on sick-leave. Awaiting attention was a cipher message decoded by 40 O.B. which announced that the Spanish ship had left Bilbao. I was thrilled. At once I sent this news, as arranged, to the chairman of the Eastern Cable Company, who replied :

“Gibraltar will be aware of this in a few seconds.”

Then I was obliged to go away to convalesce, and by chance a few days later in a Worcester hotel, the proprietor, utterly unaware, of course, of my position, drew my attention to a casual line in the news :

“Yesterday the bodies of some German sailors were found off Funchal, Madeira.”

■

The French plan had worked. Later I learned that one of the submarines had had time to submerge, but the other was sunk by gunfire after two destroyers suddenly appeared upon the scene. The Spanish ship was captured, the crew were sent home, and the wolfram found its way to England.

Another likely storm-centre for Germany's attentions was Morocco, in the Spanish zone of which disturbed country she stirred up much trouble for the French Protectorate. One of the ringleaders in German pay was Abdel Malek, of whose mission we learned early in 1915 through the British and French agents in Morocco who were posted to keep a sharp eye on the activities of the German agents among the disgruntled tribes.

It was not long before our agents reported that Abdel Malek was in constant communication with Berlin, with which he was kept in touch by the German Embassy in Madrid. Under German orders he kept up a series of spasmodic raids from the hills of the interior with the object of diverting as many French troops as possible from the Western Front as well as finding active occupation in Morocco for native battalions under French command. He made himself very tiresome during the whole of 1915 and 1916. But when I heard of the fabulous sums of money he was receiving from Germany I certainly felt he was enormously overpaid for the little he actually achieved.

But in early 1917 40 O.B. decoded many cipher messages that were passing between Morocco and Berlin, which showed that Abdel Malek was making further claims. He announced that he was short of arms and ammunition, and pointed out that a further

supply of these would considerably improve his chances of success in his tactics. The German General Staff found many difficulties in the way of sending supplies, and many communications came into the Admiralty's hands on this score. The main point of consideration was the landing-place at which the U-boat was to deposit its cargo—the coast being pretty sharply watched by the French interests.

Finally we learned that a spot close to Larache was the projected destination, a decision to which Germany was possibly hustled by the reproaches of Abdel Malek that she was not playing the game with him, added to her covert dread of his treachery.

The French Naval Attaché at the Admiralty was handed all our intercepts containing information about this project. These he transmitted to the French naval authorities, and a discussion arose as to whether the French or the British should tackle the U-boat. However, as the delivery of its cargo was to be made within the French zone there seemed no really good reason for British intervention, beyond the careful posting of the French authorities with all intercepted information.

At last over the ether came the all-important message, with the news that the U-boat had set out. Basing on this the approximate time of its arrival off the Moroccan coast the French Naval Attaché prepared Paris, which in turn set in motion the machinery for a warm reception of the German submarine.

The latter arrived according to plan off the coast of Larache. Some distance from the prearranged landing-place she came to the surface. But overhead she found hovering French aeroplanes, which before

the submarine could submerge swooped down and sent her with her cargo of rifles and ammunition to the bottom of the sea.

Meantime Abdel Malek waited in vain for his promised supplies, and when a few days had run beyond the appointed time he sent a bitter complaint to Berlin that Germany had broken her word. Berlin was naturally puzzled, and insisted that the U-boat had been sent. Abdel Malek was never entirely satisfied about Germany's good faith in the matter, but it was interesting to us to learn later that he announced his readiness to continue the campaign—on the shrewd condition that payment should be made to him not in German marks but in pesetas !

CHAPTER XII

DURING the first weeks of February 1916 I was living and working in a state of tense—though, I trust, hidden—excitement, which mounted as day followed day to a feverish restlessness of anxiety and anticipation. By accident I had myself moved one of the pawns of the Great War game, and felt deeply involved in the tremendous responsibility that this movement had forced upon the players. So it came about that I jumped when my door opened, pricked up my ears for news, snatched at telegrams, and looked at the calendar with increasing concern.

For we were watching Verdun ! Daily we expected to hear that the Germans had opened a terrific offensive there, and daily, too, we dreaded hearing that the enemy had launched himself against some other sector than Verdun. In the latter event, the Allies were probably ruined. In the former, the French were prepared for this great push which was to have been the Germans' most devastating surprise of the War. The French were prepared—for we had been able to forewarn them of its probability !

This secret of the inner history of the great French defence of Verdun has never yet been told. It is this : we had forewarned them. From us they had learned not only that Verdun was the likely objective but also that the third week in February was the projected time for the German launching of their first attack.

When I arrived at the Admiralty one morning in late January I had found waiting in my room a tall man who spoke with an American accent when he asked, or rather demanded, to see Admiral (then Captain) Hall. The Admiral was ill, so I offered to

Dear Mr Hoy,

I very well remember the afternoon, in the early days of february 1916, upon which you conveyed to me the news about an impending German attack on a very large scale upon Verdun, which news were at once transmitted to Paris. Your judgement of the American informer proved correct, and that gave us about three weeks' notice in which to prepare for this terrific onslaught.

Believe me, dear Mr Hoy,
yours sincerely



The above is a photograph of a letter recently received from Comte de Saint-Seine, who was our French Naval Attaché before the terrific German attack was launched upon Verdun.

communicate the visitor's message if he cared to give me one.

"Can't wait for that," he said. "It's very important and very secret. Can you put me on to someone in a big position here who can make a decision immediately?"

The Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence, Captain Aubrey Smith, said that he would see him. After he had been closeted with the caller for ten minutes or so he came to me and asked me to join them. The American was pacing up and down the

room with a serious frown on his face, and I felt that the atmosphere was portentously charged.

Captain Smith then explained to me :

" Mr. — has given me a piece of information he has gathered which if true is of the greatest importance." And turning to the American, he asked him if he would go over the facts again before me so that I might note them exactly.

His story was this :

" I realise that it is almost unbelievable that an ordinary citizen, and an American at that, should have got hold of such a secret," he began. " I do not pretend to assert that my information is true. I feel, though, that it is my duty to give it to you, and I do so just as it was given to me."

He had, he said, just returned from Warsaw where he had been on business. While there it had happened that he made a friendly acquaintanceship with a high German official, and just before he left the country had been asked to dine at his home.

" I went and had dinner with the family, who were making it more or less an occasion because it happened to be the daughter's birthday. The official enjoyed the little celebration thoroughly, and as the evening went on he got more and more talkative. When the ladies had retired he began to discuss the War, and as his tongue was pretty well loosened he forgot his everyday discretion."

The American diplomatically drew him on, and his host began to hint darkly that a great attack was pending that would completely finish France.

" He told me," the American continued, " that he had just returned from attending a Council of the German General Staff at Berlin. He said that the

Council were aware that their earlier mistakes could now only be put right by a terrific smash-up on the Western Front. I pricked up my ears then, I can tell you ! ”

Apparently he managed to disguise his consuming curiosity from the now over-communicative official, who soon revealed what the American was interested to learn.

“ Von Falkenhayn,” the host declared, “ has decided to strike the mightiest blow of the War, and crush France through Verdun.”

And in his confidential mood he actually told the date of the opening attack and the number of troops which Germany calculated she would have to sacrifice to achieve her plan.

“ That’s all I know,” the American said, as he ended his narrative. “ It may be a hoax to get the French to move their troops to that part of the line, and on the other hand it may be the truth. I can’t say, but at least you now know as much as I do ! ”

When he had gone Captain Smith turned to me and asked :

“ What do you think of him ? Do you believe him ? ”

“ I believe his story of what happened,” I said, “ but whether the official was speaking the truth is another matter.”

However, I dashed up in the car to Admiral Hall’s house and showed him my report of the conversation, telling him too that the American was patently straightforward and genuine in my humble opinion. The Admiral’s face was very serious. He asked me to hurry back to the Admiralty to give the report to Captain (now Comte) de Saint-Seine, the French



Topical Press

MARSHAL PETAIN
The Hero of Verdun.



COMTE DE SAINT SEINE
French Naval Attaché before the battle of Verdun.

Naval Attaché, and also to send a copy to the War Office.

The French Naval Attaché declared that this was stupendous news.

"It may be the answer to what we have wanted to know ever since we realised that a large-scale German attack was planned. That is—*when* and *where*. My own feeling is that the information is genuine. Anyhow, in two minutes they shall know this in Paris."

By his private line to Paris and in his own special code Captain de Saint-Seine immediately transmitted the sensational warning. We awaited the sequel, trembling at the colossal risk that depended on it. Truly, the fate of nations hung in the balance: the fulcrum was our diagnosis of the American's reliability.

Both Captain Aubrey Smith and myself were impressed by the candour and apparently genuine earnestness of the informant. Would the French generals be convinced by his strange story? It seemed doubtful that the German official would be so foolish as to unload this great secret on to a stranger—but the American's description of the circumstances under which this betrayal was made was easily the reply to this natural doubt. On the other hand, assuming our visitor to be honest in his narrative and intentions, then was the German official's behaviour just a big bluff?—a deliberate piece of cunning employed on the off-chance that his indiscretion would eventually reach the right quarter and lead to a massing of the French troops at Verdun, thus exposing another part of the Front to the German push?

No wonder that as the days went by and the third

week of February approached my head reeled with anxious anticipation, my dreams became nightmares, and I began to feel that I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Of what stern stuff, I would reflect, must admirals and generals be made, who shoulder their responsibilities with that kind of detachment which alone makes their task possible. My own small part in this critical time—merely the expressed conviction of a fellow-man's truthfulness—was looming before me with an importance out of all focus. I was waiting for the 20th of February, the date given by the American informant.

The 20th came. No news. On the 21st the French Naval Attaché hurried into Admiral Hall's room, and finding me there he pressed my hand and congratulated me on my judgment of Mr.—, the American. That morning at 7.15 a.m. the Germans had opened a bombardment of unparalleled intensity toward Verdun. But the French guns were ready. The French generals had elected to take the risk of believing the American's story, and had prepared their defence.

I think this was the biggest thrill of my life.

The story of Verdun is now history, but during this period the light thrown upon it by Captain Saint-Seine in his frequent friendly chats with me in Admiral Hall's room provided engrossing comparisons with the German official's injudicious revelation.

Before the attack opened Captain Saint-Seine went through the points which in his opinion gave credence to this forecast. For many months France had been unhappily aware that the Germans were in an advantageous position. Russia was disorganised,

Italy weakened by doubts, and Britain preoccupied by the problem of preparing the recruits under the Military Service Act which was due to come into force on January 27th, 1916. Obviously Germany was going to make the best of her advantage in this critical moment.

The Allies expected an attack early in 1916, but were uncertain as to the part of the Front which Germany would select for her purpose. Verdun was frequently considered as a possibility, but the tendency of Allied consideration was to the region of Paris and Flanders. Moreover, General Joffre's theory that fortresses were obsolete as modern war defences had resulted in the withdrawal of troops and guns from Verdun.

The Germans were in a position of valuable strength at this juncture. Their easy means of communication—which has been called their "inner circle"—made it unnecessary for them to keep large numbers of troops in reserve, a contrast to the imperative need of the Allies in this respect. In addition, their artillery was of greatly superior strength, and their scientific research had evolved for them poisonous gases in the output of which they were overwhelmingly in advance of the French chemical factories.

Notwithstanding their awareness of these vital factors of the German position, and the circumstance that the British troops were raw, the Allies continued to make plans for a combined offensive for the summer of 1916, and the Commission of the Army considered this scheme on December 5th of 1915 at Chantilly. We were represented by Field-Marshal French, General Robertson and General Murray, Belgium

by General Wielemans, Italy by General Porro, Russia by General Gilinski, and Serbia by Colonel Stepanovitch. For the offensive the Allies were to engage the enemy in intensive local actions with a view to wearing down their strength, these tactics to be followed as early as possible by combined general actions. The German High Command, it was held, would thus be pressed for assistance on the other fronts, and by simultaneous attacks the German advantage of the inner circle would be considerably lessened. Gallipoli was to be evacuated, troops in Egypt reduced to a minimum, and the Salonika Front reorganised.

These suggestions were detailed in General Joffre's memorandum, which was agreed to. When, therefore, Sir Douglas Haig took over the British command from Field-Marshal French on December 19th, arrangements were made between him and General Joffre for a combined attack in the Somme region by the British and French troops.

In outlining the general position, the French Naval Attaché informed me that the French Intelligence Branch had become aware of Germany's preparations for an offensive on their part which was likely to mature ahead of ours. But the Operations Department were convinced of the greater importance of their own offensive schemes, which they short-sightedly continued to pursue. The French Intelligence Service sent many rumours to headquarters about the enemy's plans, but these were both vague and contradictory, and involved several points on the line besides the two obvious dangers, Belfort and Verdun. Joffre persisted in ignoring these and maintaining his original plan which had been approved

by the Commission at Chantilly. The French military chiefs, said Captain Saint-Seine, actually thought that the Verdun sector was the least likely to be the point of a great German offensive.

Suddenly the evidence began to mount up.

First of all there were reports from our air scouts towards the end of January concerning the movements of large numbers of German troops. To support the implication in this activity there was evidence in letters taken by the French from German prisoners that there was to be an attack on a grand scale. The Kaiser and the Crown Prince, these letters said exultantly, would be in the field to lead the troops in their triumphant last effort for victory and peace.

Following on these discoveries there came from us the amazing news betrayed at Warsaw, which the Allied Commanders received from the French Naval Attaché at the beginning of February and which they regarded as of such overwhelming importance as to demand imperative action. The French Command at once took precautions, and began to move divisions to defensive positions in the Verdun sector. They were further confirmed in the wisdom of these movements by the discovery a few days later of German manœuvres in this neighbourhood. From a deserter they learned of the presence of two corps, and an intelligence officer about the same time reported the concentration of enemy troops along the further bank of the River Meuse. It looked as if the American's information might be accurate. By February 20th the whole XX Corps was at the disposal of the French defence. On the 21st the storm burst !

There will always remain in my mind the picture that the French Naval Attaché drew for me of Verdun as it was before that date. After General Joffre had induced in 1915 the French Government to "declass" this post along with others of the line as a fortress, it had all its peace-time air. Douaumont towered above them all. It was the key to all the forts. In winter time the Meuse often rose and flooded the intervening meadows, leaving a scene of desolation—deserted trenches, barbed wire, muddy flats—one of the French arguments against the likelihood of the enemy's attack being directed thither. From the forts there was hardly a sound to be heard beyond the distant shriek of occasional shells, and the defenders did not expect to be disturbed.

The many false rumours spread by the Germans, all of which had a semblance of probability, confused rather than misled the Allies, and throughout these early weeks of February no one could know whether the information the American had conveyed was sound. Some of these conflicting reports suggested that the great military activity in Germany might be meant for the Eastern Front.

Proof of this side-tracking of the Allied interest is seen in a letter sent on February 10th by Joffre to Haig. The projected Franco-British attack on the Somme, said the French general, must depend entirely upon whether the initiative could be held until the time arranged, that is, the coming summer, or whether the enemy should try to frustrate this by a powerful attack on the Russians during the spring. "If the Germans," he added, "got ahead of us by striking at the Russians, our assistance to the latter would take the form of the offensive, carried on by

the French and British on the Somme as if they still had the initiative."

But General Joffre altered his plans when he received the warning sent from the Admiralty by the French Naval Attaché, though in his reinforcement of the Verdun region he took precautionary measures for the protection of Paris and the naval bases of Pas-de-Calais.

As post-war knowledge of the aims of Germany has bared to the world most of the facts of the then secret activities of those chaotic years, we now know that it was during January of 1916 that the German Staff made their final plans as to the venue and date of their big attack. This tallied exactly with the information offered by the American !

The main plan emanated from General von Falkenhayn, who was alive to every aspect, psychological and military, of his scheme ; it was he, for instance, who wished the Crown Prince to be in the field for the encouragement of his troops. The German attitude was chiefly directed against England. It was impossible to bring England to her knees unless she could be reached by the demoralisation on the Western Front of her French allies, plus an intensive and ruthless submarine campaign.

The latter portion of the programme was by no means unanimously agreed to at Wilhelmstrasse. Those who regarded it with disfavour indicated the danger of rousing the hostility of neutral nations, of whom such operations might have hurt several. The United States, of course, were the foremost consideration in this regard. But this argument was effectively quashed by the reiteration of President Wilson's words, his now world-famous dictum that a man

may be "too proud to fight." The general inference was that nothing on earth—not even the lynching of every German in the U.S.A. !—would force America on to the side of the Allies. A nation would stand a great deal who attempted no reprisals for such a national outrage as the sinking of the *Lusitania* with the great loss of life of its own nationals.

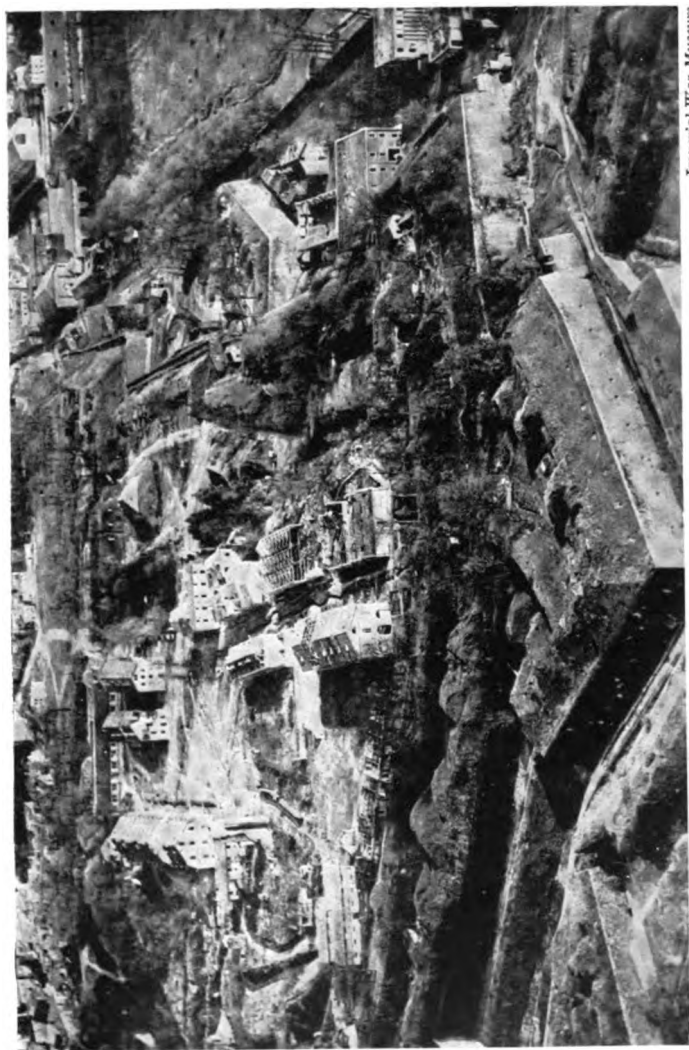
In the matter of troops Germany felt herself to be in a stronger position at that moment than ever before. The German General Staff, though not overlooking the fact that England could supply plenty of recruits later on, knew that at this time most of our forces were in the field—and for the rest, it would be some time before the non-military men were trained. France had suffered a year of terrible losses, her morale was deteriorating, and to the eyes of Germany she appeared to be exhausted. France, they calculated, could be bled white.

It was their hour to strike.

Thus there arrived the fateful day, February 21st, with its confirmation of our strangely-acquired warning. The attack upon Paris was shelved. By capturing Verdun the morale of the French would in their opinion collapse.

The message of the Crown Prince on February 12th read :

"Let us realise to the full that the Fatherland expects great things of us. We must prove to the enemy that the iron will of the sons of Germany, set on victory, is still unbroken, and that the German Army, when it advances to the attack, stops for no obstacle."



Imperial War Museum

AERIAL VIEW OF VERDUN



General Photographic Agency

A CHARACTERISTIC PHOTOGRAPH OF THE EX-CROWN PRINCE
WILHELM OF GERMANY WITH HIS WIFE

On this day the Germans began their manœuvres, and future generations of students of history will doubtless marvel at the thoroughness and secrecy with which these were carried out. Within a few days eight divisions had been marched into the abandoned trenches and the ravines, under cover of the woods to the east of the Verdun sector, without discovery, and their heavy guns placed in position. Yet even as late as February 18th the French High Command, while taking precautionary measures, were still in doubt about Verdun as the objective of the German attack, maintaining an attitude—admittedly justifiable—that our warning might be no more than an enemy ruse.

The invisible German forces of about six divisions took up their positions with the advantage of a narrow front of attack, and their superior artillery was by Berlin calculated to reduce Verdun to ruins within a few days. In the memoirs of the Crown Prince we learn that under his charge were a hundred and sixty heavy batteries—that is, nearly seven hundred modern guns, not counting the field artillery. No wonder that the Crown Prince, continuing his statement, is able to describe the bombardment as the “Hell of Verdun.” He assuredly had every chance of success, and he hoped within a short time to be in a position to invite the Kaiser to witness the scene of his triumph.

The German artillery started their serious bombardment in the early morning of February 21st. There has never been anything in modern warfare to approach the ghastly ferocity that turned this comparatively peaceful part of the line into a zone of death. The French defenders had to face a shower

of metal, poisonous gases and shrapnel. The big German guns shook the forts, and more than two million shells were thrown into the small arc of Brabant and Verdun. At 5 p.m. the enemy infantry advanced.

The French had made up their minds that the moral bulwark of France must be saved whatever the cost. But still uncertain after three days whether this was a feint or no, General Joffre decided to send General de Castelnau to the scene. De Castelnau arrived at 5 a.m. on February 25th, quickly drank a cup of coffee, and issued his order :

“ The Meuse *must* be held on the right bank. There can be no question of any other course than that of checking the enemy, cost what it may, on that bank.”

This task was entrusted by General de Castelnau to Marshal Pétain, who arrived with his staff the same morning shortly after the former general appeared on the scene. Within the next few days Pétain had somewhat delayed the German advance by his organisation of a series of counter-attacks—a playing for time necessary because of the difficulty of getting through his supplies, the Germans having destroyed with their guns most of the French lines of communication into the salient.

The morale of the French had already been badly shaken by the fall of Douaumont on the 25th, the fort like that of Verdun having been left only partially fortified. The German troops, after crossing the ravines, got into the trenches, climbed up the snowy slopes, and finally got through the casemates, led by their Lieutenant Brandis who, in a frenzy of excite-

ment, yelled to his men : " Douaumont ! " and hurled them forward. The French defenders suffered serious losses, and this, combined with the fall of the key-fortress, had had a terribly depressing effect on France. All sorts of rumours circulated, and for a time both the army and the nation were disturbed by tales of treachery. Marshal Pétain did his best to put an end to these false reports, and made new arrangements for the defence of Verdun.

On March 11th General Joffre arrived on the scene. This put new heart into the French troops. His order of the day was skilfully worded to appeal to their pride and loyalty :

" You will be among those of whom it shall be said : ' They held the gate of Verdun against the Germans.' "

On April 10th Pétain was able to issue the following order :

" April 9th is a glorious day for our armies. The violent assaults of the Crown Prince's soldiers have been beaten back at every point. All have vied with one another in heroism. The German attacks are certainly not over yet. Every man must watch and work for further success. We must all have courage, for victory shall be ours."

By May 1st the Allies were gaining confidence in the amazing pertinacity of the defence by the French. General headquarters at Chantilly were inundated with congratulatory messages from England, Italy, and all the Allies' diplomatic representatives abroad. Encouraging news was received from Austria, who was weary of German military dictation and ready

to break her alliance. On May 31st General Pétain issued another order to his army :

“ . . . Your indomitable energy will soon exhaust the finest troops of the German Army. Your trials will soon be over, for our powerful Allies will soon join us in other fields of action. . . . If you will all work together with the same inflexible determination, the glory of having played an important part in assuring to your country peace with victory will be yours.”

By June the German Crown Prince, ordered by von Falkenhayn to take Verdun at any cost, began to doubt the certainty of his success, and moreover was rapidly becoming at loggerheads with the commander-in-chief. On June 4th General Brusiloff opened a wide offensive in Volhynia, and in Italy General Cadorna was actively doing his share between the Adige and the Brenta. The German General Staff were now between the devil and the deep sea, for in addition to these menaces from the Eastern Front there was looming a great attack on the Western Front by the British and French armies. The final decision was arrived at after many controversial conferences. First the defeat of France must be brought about, after which the Eastern situation would be dealt with.

At the end of the month the Crown Prince gave this statement to Germany :

“ Every day I doubted more seriously whether the French, with their systems of rapid reliefs, were actually suffering greater losses than we.”

The effect on the home population was distinctly damping.

Meantime in France both the people and the troops were upset by the accusing line taken by the French press, which put General Joffre and Marshal Pétain in an unfavourable light. A further appeal was made to the Army by the Commander-in-Chief :

“ Soldiers of Verdun . . . I appeal to you to summon all your courage, all your spirit of sacrifice, all your zeal and love for your country, and to hold fast until the end, checking the last attempts of the enemy, who now stands at bay.”

This was reinforced by the announcement that the great Franco-British attack would begin almost immediately.

This last appeal from General Joffre and the presence of Marshal Pétain had an arresting effect on the rot that seemed to be setting in, and were probably the chief factors in the saving of France.

A crisis was reached in the affairs of Germany when on August 21st the Crown Prince dismissed General von Knobelsdorf, his chief of staff, whom he had always suspected of being too friendly with the stubborn von Falkenhayn, to whose attitude of “ on and always on ” the Crown Prince was now openly hostile.

Through our Intelligence Division at the Admiralty we were fully aware that the von Falkenhayn stock was by that time very low in Germany, and we were able to keep the French alive to the fact that if they could only hold out it would not be long before the German morale was broken.

Further encouragement was added by the presentation to Verdun by M. Poincaré on September 13th,

of the Cross of the Legion of Honour and Allied decorations, in a ceremony which stirred the deepest feelings of the French. From that date the tide of battle seemed definitely to turn, but with varying vicissitudes which dragged it out for another year.

The final blows were struck during the third week of August 1917, when, after ten thousand prisoners had been taken by the French, nothing remained in German hands but Beaumont.

It is true that from such casual sources of information did we sometimes get information of incalculable value. In this instance the story brought to us from Warsaw by the American probably changed world history, so accurate was it, even in detail of date, venue and forecast of Germany's losses.

In the light of post-War claims to this victory, a new claim might be made for this information conveyed to the French High Command through the instrumentality of the Admiralty—which resulted in the advance defending of Verdun, thus probably preventing the overrunning of a considerable portion of France by the German hordes, if not saving the whole French Army from ruin. In a word, it was the British Navy that saved the French Army.

CHAPTER XIII

IT has always seemed to me that the three best-kept secrets of the War were the existence of 40 O.B., the transportation of the British Expeditionary Force to the other side of the Channel, and the removal of the Grand Fleet to Scapa Flow immediately after the outbreak of war.

The story of the journey north of our battleships makes an indelible impression on the imagination—a picture of the big grey monsters moving steadfastly through the broken waters, all lights out by night, hurrying to the tryst and exposed, should any leakage of their movements occur, to a common danger. So imperative were haste and secrecy that there was no time to arrange for protection against possible German submarines. If their destination had been breathed, it would at that date no doubt have reached German ears. The enemy would then have been given a very pretty double opportunity—to attack the Channel ports in the absence of the bulk of our Fleet, and to send submarines into the waters of Scapa Flow.

The U-boat menace was infinitely greater than the general public was permitted for a long time to realise. We ourselves did not know its full potentialities at the outset, for the submarine resources of the enemy were unknown to the Allies then. Looking back, our first attempts to check the enemy in the narrows of the Baltic by submarine attacks—which we tried in

September 1914—when Commander Horton disposed of an enemy cruiser and a destroyer and in November when Commander Cromie sank another German cruiser—appear an almost futile gesture in the face of our later information.

But though the Germans had a great pull over us in the superiority of their submarine supply during the first years of the War, they were on the whole less successful than ourselves in personnel. Towards the end of the War, indeed, they found great difficulty in getting suitable commanders and suitable crews. For the true genius of “the trade,” as submarine men rechristened their service, like other geniuses, is born rather than made.

Remarkable as in the light of fuller knowledge we admit the achievements of many U-boat commanders to have been, it seems to me extraordinary that we should have had to wait for such a long time before the courageous and heroic exploits of some of our own submarine commanders were related. It is a pity that we did not take fuller advantage of our successes by broadcasting these heroic deeds at the time. The Intelligence Division, realising the certain effect on the general morale, wished to do this. But I am inclined to think that there was some jealousy of the achievements of the Navy. Certainly the Army got much more credit from the man in the street, who is always prepared to give honour where he is told honour is due.

Until recent years, the great part played by the Navy has not been fully appreciated. “The Silent Service” is indeed aptly so-called!

The submarine element of the service too, having once touched the popular imagination, has now given

rise to a crop of popular fiction for the young, based on imaginary under-sea adventures, as well as equally popular but more authoritative volumes. The more pity, since submarine exploits have thus proved to have such an appeal, that more publicity was not made during the War of this aspect of our home and Imperial defences.

The courage and enterprise of Commander Courtney Boyle, for instance, provoked him to many gallant deeds, of which his defiance of the Turks and German gunners in the Sea of Marmora is likely to become one of our heroic legends. The Germans themselves now admire this as the biggest feat in the whole of the War on the seas.

Among Boyle's biggest scoops was the torpedoing of the Turkish transport, *Guj Djemal*, near Gallipoli with six thousand troops aboard. On behalf of his crew he applied for the recognised "blood-money," an award of five pounds per head of soldiers and sailors—a tidy little sum of thirty thousand pounds in all. The crew of E 14, Boyle's command, numbered thirty, and were therefore jubilant at the prospect of being independent for life if and when they returned home with their thousand pounds apiece. But the Admiralty Prize Court rejected the Commander's application on the grounds that *Guj Djemal* was armed for purposes of defence only.

Another daring officer who increased the terror of the Turks, who were already unnerved by Boyle's uncanny success, was Commander M. E. Nasmith, who was reputed at the Admiralty to have "nerves of steel." His submarine, E 11, sank the old Turkish battleship *Stambul* actually within sight of Constantinople.

This, our Intelligence Division learned from neutral informers, had put Constantinople into a state of increased panic. Germany warned the Turks to watch their transports. Turkey, on the other hand, protested that she was being left practically alone to defend her shores against the British fleet. Germany replied in effect :

“We have our hands full. Do the best you can.”

Commander Nasmith's extraordinary coolness was well illustrated by his conduct in taking photographs of the ships he intended as his victims a few seconds before he torpedoed them and sending them to the Admiralty. One of the newest and best vessels of the Rickmers Line he photographed in a sinking condition following on his attack on her. Small wonder the Admiralty Commission spoke of his nerves of steel !

Commander Bruce with E 12 followed some weeks later, and also performed thrilling exploits which are now history.

And so these and other brave men carried on the fight in the Dardanelles among incidents that, were they written as fiction, would be dismissed as utterly incredible achievements. One of the many mysteries of the War which the Admiralty attempted to solve is associated with these exploits. This was the disappearance of Lieutenant Lyons, one of the heroes of the Dardanelles campaign.

Fired by the example of Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes, who swam ashore and successfully blew up a railway bridge, Lieutenant Lyons made a similar attempt. It was an impulsive action, planned in haste. A demolition charge was sent ahead of him in a small boat,

and dressed in light clothing and carrying a revolver Lyons set out in the dark of night. He had the advantage of being an unusually powerful swimmer, so that his brother officers agreed he had every chance of reaching his objective, the sound of an explosion from which would inform them that he had carried out his scheme.

He left them with a last wave of the hand when a few yards from the shore, and an understanding that if he got into difficulties he would signal back with a Very light. His colleagues waited anxiously through the hours. There was no signal—but as dawn was breaking a terrific explosion was heard. Lyons had broken down the bridge—but he never came back. His body was not recovered and no evidence was ever obtained concerning his movements after he got on shore.

Every possible source of enquiry through neutral channels was made by the Admiralty, but no information was forthcoming. At the close of the War further enquiries were made among the Turks, but they too had nothing to disclose. And there the tragedy rests—the complete story of which would have been valuable to us in helping our general morale, which I maintain was inevitably improved by every heroic incident in which we could take a national pride.

In the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* on May 7th, 1915, off the coast of Queenstown many Americans had lost their lives. The Queenstown jury who held the dreadful inquest had returned the verdict : Wilful murder against the Kaiser. Although America assumed the attitude that this submarine attack could not be held to be deliberately directed against her, the tragedy brought home to them what a ruthless

and devastating business this modern type of maritime attack could be.

In the following February, three weeks after Germany had announced her unrestricted submarine warfare, the Cunarder *Laconia* was torpedoed. Amongst those who lost their lives in this disaster were two American women, Mrs. Hoy and her daughter. The Cunard Company posted in their windows a bare statement of the loss of the ship. A passer-by saw this, and went in to make enquiries. He gave his name as Hoy and described himself as an American citizen, which elicited the fact that his mother and sister were passengers on *Laconia*.

Later he was informed that both had died, and he rushed straight to the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty to learn further details. Permission was given him to send a long cable to President Wilson. He was told that he need not spare words, and so he wrote fully that he was thoroughly ashamed to be an American citizen, and that he was prepared to sacrifice his prosperous business in order to fight and so take a hand in avenging the murder of his mother and sister. I heard later that he was going to join the East Surreys, but what his fate was I do not know.

America ought thus to have been prepared. From the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty we warned them of the probable dangers to their own shipping. We were primed with the dark hints obtained from 40 O.B.'s interceptions of the enemy's wireless. But I am afraid they paid very little heed. They hoped and believed that Germany's preoccupation would be so fixed on European waters that no question of a definite campaign on American vessels in American waters would ever arise.



Topical Press

COMMANDER M. E. NASMITH OF THE DARDANELLES



Topical Press

COMMANDER F. N. A. CROMIE, R.N.
Murdered on the steps of the British Embassy at Petrograd.

It was a sad mistake. During March the *Algonquin* and three other American ships were torpedoed in the Atlantic. Still, America comforted herself, the U-boats had not penetrated into her home waters. However, when the U-boat offensive was in full swing, the U 151 suddenly appeared off the coast of Virginia in mid-May 1918. She reaped a cruel harvest. Before she disappeared again she had succeeded in sinking no less than twenty vessels. This was indeed a success, and the German Navy promptly planned to carry on a series of attacks in American waters.

On June 15th 40 O.B. intercepted a wireless message announcing the departure of U 156 from the Kiel Canal, and suggesting that her destination was to be the scene of U 151's depredations. We immediately informed America.

Subsequent information made her movements clear. From the North Sea she passed via the Shetland Isles into the Atlantic. There, more or less *en passant*, she sent to the bottom the British steamer *Tortuguero*, and continued towards New York. But for the challenge that met her she might have worked appalling havoc. But for our warning this challenge would not have been made. For U 156 was craftily disguised as a steamer with a dummy funnel—a device that made it possible for her to approach within short range of her intended victim before opening fire.

The existence of the "Q" boats was kept very "pink." If anyone employed in the secret heart of the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty had mentioned them in an unguarded moment, I think the Tower of London would have opened its gates to

receive him ! Very few even in the Intelligence Division were aware of the existence of these "whited sepulchres" of boats, and the private word by which the privileged few referred to them was "Hush Boats."

These vessels, wearing the outward semblance of the ordinary ocean-going tramp, appeared through the periscope of a submarine a very easy prey. They were, of course, a wonderful decoy.

The first success recorded was on July 25th, 1915, when one of them, *Prince Charles*, was encountered by the German U-boat U 36 off North Rona Island. U 36 fired a shell across her bows, and at once the crew of the tramp appeared to be making preparations to abandon ship, many of them taking to the lifeboats. U 36 drew nearer, but when she was about four hundred yards away the tramp's hatches suddenly swung open, and from her concealed guns came a volley which sent the submarine to the bottom. Following on that misadventure, the German naval authorities issued a warning to their U-boat commanders to be wary in their attacks upon apparently unarmed ships.

Some of the greatest unknown heroes of the sea in these days were the gallant men of our fishing fleets. These men suffered greatly in the course of their work, and remained loyal and helpful beyond all praise. They lived day and night in constant dread of attack, for the U-boats had a nasty little habit of coming up near the fishing fleets and sinking as many of them as possible. The German Admiralty claimed justification on the grounds that as we hoped to starve out Germany by means of the blockade so they might retaliate by stinting us of fish. The

inhumanity of attacking men who were unarmed and pursuing a peaceful occupation was ruled out of calculation : they were regarded as a fair target since they were occupied in feeding Great Britain.

Nowhere have I ever seen what seems to me glowing enough recognition of the services of these splendid fellows, our fishermen—greater services than the general public knew of at the time. I think the help derived by the Intelligence Division from them too ought to be put on record in gratitude to a body of men who would take any chance to get and impart information, and never scuttled away from danger if they thought that by facing it they could serve their country's cause.

Spain also suffered similarly from these wholesale submarine attacks on her vessels which, laden with cargoes of fruit and wine, were making their way to England. Before they sank the Spanish ships the German officers helped themselves liberally to the food and drink which the vessels carried—and thereby hangs a strange tale.

A ship leaving Spain with a consignment of sherry ostensibly destined for England was held up outside Bilbao by a U-boat. The German officers and crew commandeered supplies of the wine, and according to the accounts of the Spanish crew, they did themselves well, preparatory to torpedoing the cargo-boat, and then submerged. But they failed to come to the surface again !

Among the possible explanations of this mysterious disappearance of the submarine put forward at the time was one wicked suggestion that the sherry had been poisoned before it was shipped at Bilbao !

To revert to the gallantry of our own much-

harassed fishermen—I must recall a suggestion which, after their increasing losses, they put before the Admiralty, and which met with approval. The idea was as simple as a child's game. The fishing-boats were in any case an involuntary decoy, and in this guise they proposed to continue deliberately, screening an armed vessel at a short distance away.

Later this scheme was elaborated, a submerged submarine being in tow behind a trawler. As soon as the trawler sighted a U-boat she would signal to her own submarine. The trawler's crew, in actual fact composed of naval men, would then make for the boats and leave our submarine to tackle the situation.

Before this trick was discovered by the Germans we had the proud satisfaction of receiving reports of excellent results from this game on the North Sea.

Commander Cromie, one of the splendid pioneers of our submarine offensive against Germany, of whom I have already spoken, was, as everyone knows, a victim to Russia through his own loyal and heroic defence of our English prestige in Petrograd. The Russian Revolution had no braver victim.

His story, which has been brilliantly told by Lieutenant W. G. Carr in *By Guess and by God*,¹ made a deep impression on me when I first heard it from his friend and former colleague, the late Lieutenant Anderson, R.N.V.R. Before Cromie's death, Anderson, who was Sir Oswald Stoll's secretary at the Coliseum before the outbreak of war and who had been attached to the British Embassy at Petrograd, returned to the Intelligence Division at the Admiralty. In talking to me one day with the

¹ *By Guess and by God*, by William Guy Carr. Published by Hutchinson.

deepest admiration for Cromie, Anderson remarked with conviction :

“ If he goes down, he'll go down fighting. That I swear.”

He did indeed go down fighting—all honour to him—and strangely enough on the very steps of the British Embassy. It was a poignant picture for his former colleague to visualise.

Anderson, in describing the chaotic revolutionary conditions amid which Cromie was trying to hold up the British end, told me many of his own personal adventures under the new Bolshevik régime. Some of them were, at any rate in retrospect, amusing.

As looting and outrage were the order of the day hold-ups of an even more flagrant kind than those of America's recent years were frequent. One night Anderson was making his way homeward from the Embassy when he was stopped by a Bolshevik who demanded his watch. The lieutenant felt for his watch with his left hand and found it missing. As he was groping for it he quickly with his right hand pulled out his revolver, and threatened to shoot the fellow unless the latter returned the watch—which Anderson rapidly concluded must have been taken from him by the same man when, a few minutes earlier, he had felt himself jostled in the dark street.

The Russian, cowed by the revolver, at once produced a handful of watches from his blouse, and selected one, which he handed over to Anderson. Lieutenant Anderson then let him go. When he examined the watch he had retrieved he found it to be not his own but a much more valuable one !

He recounted the incident to his wife on reaching home. As she listened her look of astonishment

changed to a broad smile, and at the end of his story she said :

“ Why, you didn’t take your watch with you at all this morning. It’s on your dressing-table ! ”

Shortly before Lieutenant Anderson left for England he was called upon by a Russian who had got wind of his coming departure. The man enquired whether he could buy any civilian suits that Anderson might care to dispose of. In the panicky conditions that existed, the latter decided it would be wise to accept the suggestion, but he named a pretty tall figure for the four suits he was willing to sell. However, the Russian was not dismayed, and after a little preliminary haggling agreed upon a price, which he offered to pay in roubles.

“ Oh, no, no,” said Anderson, shaking his head decidedly. “ Roubles, you understand, will be useless to me in England.”

The purchaser looked relieved rather than otherwise, and when he returned to collect the goods made his payment in English sovereigns !

CHAPTER XIV

AMONG the manifold obligations to the activities of 40 O.B. which the Allies in general, the British nation as a unit, and the civilian population in especial, owe, none is greater than the work of this department in relation to the air raids from which we suffered from early 1915 onwards. Thanks to the Zeppelins' habit of communicating freely with one another and their homeland by wireless, 40 O.B. was constantly in a position to warn us of impending raids, and to check the fate of the German airships. There were, as will be seen, several instances where the preparedness of our anti-aircraft guns was solely due to 40 O.B.'s intercepts.

One of the emergencies for which our department was fortunately on the alert was the enemy's cautionary measure of changing their code key at frequent intervals. They began to do this after the earliest losses of vessels belonging to their Mercantile Marine, for as all vessels carried a code-book there could be no absolute certainty that these had not been found and placed in our hands—one of the intricate problems shared by all nations involved in modern conditions of warfare.

40 O.B.'s task was considerably simplified on the occasions when they learned that "H.V.B." was the cipher. When, for instance, the Zeppelin commanders were about to leave their sheds and reported

that they had only "H.V.B." with them, this was to 40 O.B. an indication that their most confidential naval code would not be used. The message "Only H.V.B. on board" was the prelude to a raid on Great Britain—though approximately where we had to wait and see.

The duty of 40 O.B.'s staff was the very trying one of deciphering as quickly as possible the ever-changing code, translating the message into plain English, and then passing it on to the Director of Naval Intelligence. The latter then acquainted the authorities concerned with all possible speed. If we were lucky, then we were able to discover not only that a raid was intended, but the names and numbers of the Zepps, and even sometimes the locality they were hoping to damage. Given greater adequacy of our defences against air raids, these timely notices would have been a boon indeed. As it was, the warning of the civilian population was made possible, and though there was bloodshed and terror and to spare the horrors were diminished.

Opinions regarding the advisability of these warnings were at the time very mixed. The Chief Constable of Hull, where exposure to these raids was inevitable, gave his opinion in late 1915 as follows :

"The warning buzzer used in Hull was intended, and in theory is still used, for the purpose of extinguishing lights rapidly, for calling out the special constables, and for assembling the ambulance workers, but in practice it is regarded as a warning to the population. It has been opposed by a good many of the upper classes, but there is an almost unanimous desire for it among the other classes, and I have insisted on its being kept, having once started it,

because (1) it gets all lights out in from ten to twenty minutes, (2) the result of it is that on ordinary nights the people are perfectly careless and secure.

"But the result of it also is that when it sounds great numbers of people leave their houses and troop out with their children into the country, and in some cases stay there for hours in the fields. They are perfectly orderly and show no signs of panic, but it must be a very harassing thing for the women and children, and as a matter of fact the schools do not open the morning after. Sick people, old people, others who cannot leave their houses, and many of the better classes, who prefer to stay at home, are always greatly upset on 'buzzer' nights."

On the whole the behaviour of the general public under the influence of this terrifying new method of warfare was admirable. Many of the poorer classes (who are regarded on the whole as being the least capable of self-control) set an example of self-possession and cheeriness. There were of course numbers of the more prosperous classes who scuttled away from the danger zones to comparatively safe places. Mr. Lloyd George, I remember, described Bath at the time as the "funk hole of Europe!"

But on highly sensitive and overstrung people the air-raids naturally had a serious effect. It was physically impossible for such temperaments to stand the strain without harm to nerves and general health.

In all the excitement of knowing what was afoot I could never bring myself to leave the Admiralty. I just had to stay and see what might happen, for at the Admiralty the tension was especially high. It was held that one of the main objectives in the case of a raid on London would be the buildings of the

Admiralty itself, since the Germans must be longing to destroy the wireless apparatus with which we communicated with the Grand Fleet. They little knew, however, that a still greater loss to us would be incurred—that of the secret department, 40 O.B., from which came our warnings of their approach. As the intensity of the attacks increased and lighting restrictions grew to a maximum, we carried on our evening work with subdued lights behind close-fitting dark blinds. It was a tantalising situation—knowing at once so much and so little.

When the raids on London began to be persistent and serious, there would be a rush for the underground railway stations—often long before there was a “take cover” warning. My own first experience of a Tube station under these circumstances was at Dover Street Station, where shortly after 5 p.m. I saw people—who certainly did not appear to be residents of that aristocratic neighbourhood—taking up positions. Many of them carried or dragged bedding, pillows and provisions, and so dense was the mob on the staircase that it was almost impossible to get through.

That evening there was a big raid in that district. The Ritz had a narrow escape, and the members of the Bath Club, including the late Earl Balfour and Lord Denbigh, were ordered to the club basement. But Lord Denbigh was on business bent, and, determined to get his train for the East Coast to attend to his command, he walked calmly over the street to Dover Street Station with Lady Dorothie Feilding and myself. I remember Lady Dorothie’s nonchalance when, as the bombs fell from the skies, she remarked that they were not nearly so heavy as the

ones she ran her private ambulance through in Belgium. Yet she made light of the risks she ran there, risks which a famous war correspondent felt it his duty to report to Lord Denbigh as his daughter's "great but foolish bravery."

Somehow we managed to get down to the platform by coercing or cajoling the crowd in possession of the staircase. Once having put foot on the platform, though, it was only possible to draw near the edge by forcing one's way through the tightly wedged masses of people. One fellow—he had a foreign accent—complained to Lord Denbigh, ignoring his uniform :

"You *do* seem to be in a hurry !"

Train after train passed with every inch of space so filled that the conductors could not open the gates. In despair I attracted the attention of one of them by raising my hand and pointing to Lord Denbigh. He must have been a Sandow expert, for somehow or other he got the doors open, flung about ten of the standing passengers on to the already dangerously crowded platform, and got the Earl into the train.

I decided not to accept the latter's offer of his room at the Bath Club but made my way home to Golders Green. When I got out of the station there I found myself in another air-raid ! I walked on for a quarter of a mile, and then the guns boomed out again. I bolted into the entrance-way of a block of flats, and there I sat on the cold steps reading a newspaper over and over again—and knowing no more about it than when I first opened it. In a flat over my head some cheery folk were making the best of things with gay music : it sounded a strange and tinkling accompaniment to the deep bass roar of the guns, I remember. Others besides myself were sheltering there, and one

quite normal-looking person suddenly turned to me and said :

“ Please don’t light a cigarette.”

“ What ? ” I said, startled.

“ Please don’t. Please don’t light a cigarette.”

I had not produced a cigarette or indeed thought of rashly striking a light, but so abnormal were all our nerves at the moment that I responded in kind, saying earnestly :

“ No, indeed I won’t. I won’t light a cigarette.”

After the first Zeppelin raid in London that produced casualties, Admiral Hall asked me to visit the affected district and report on the moral result on the inhabitants. I spent some time there taking soundings, and discovered that on the whole the effect was definitely in our favour. The women were highly enraged, and would, I am convinced, have torn the crew of the airship to pieces with their hands if they had come down within their reach. They levelled such personal insults at the men who had not yet joined the fighting forces, attacking them as cowards who would stay at home and watch women and children killed, that the next day there was a queue at the recruiting offices.

After each Zeppelin raid the queues increased like snowballs. In fact, the more raids, the more recruits.

Raid nights were indeed not without their humour, and the cheeriness of the Cockney civilians under the stress of warlike conditions was amazing. One amusing story that went the rounds of the Admiralty at the time emanated from that popular comedian and raconteur, George Graves. Recently in his autobiography¹

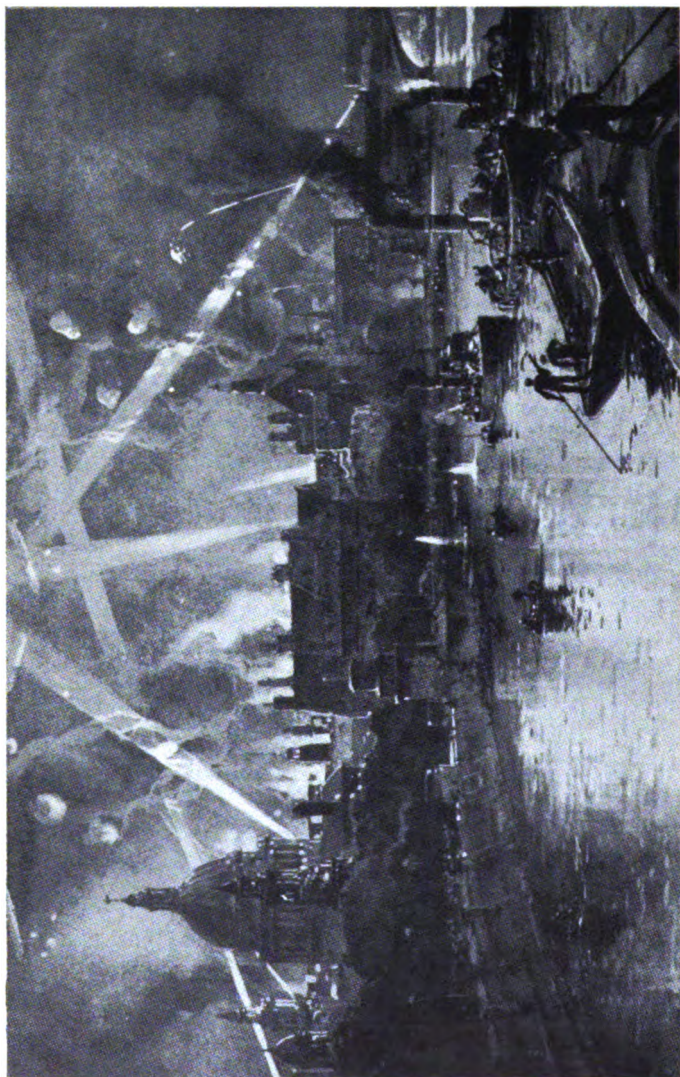
¹ See *Gaieties and Gravities*, by George Graves (Hutchinson).



Exclusive News Agency

"A GERMAN ZEPPELIN OVER THE TOWER OF LONDON ON AUGUST 17, 1915"

From a drawing published in a German newspaper at the time.



Exclusive News Agency

"OUR LAST VISIT TO BLACKFRIARS"

A contemporary picture from a German newspaper illustrating an alleged "attack by an army of Zeppelins."

Mr. Graves has given the details which I take the liberty of repeating here.

Like many of his professional colleagues, Mr. Graves not only helped to keep up the national morale by his gifts as an entertainer but undertook voluntary national work as well. One raid night, having finished his performance at a West End theatre, he repaired to the beat to which he had been allotted as a special constable. This was in a poor quarter off Holborn. Amid the roar of bombs, the bark of anti-aircraft artillery and the rattle of shrapnel he noticed a woman sitting on a doorstep nursing a screaming child.

"Shut up, you little —," she commanded. And then, either in ignorance of the working conditions of the "Jerries" who sat up aloft or to threaten the child with a new and effective bogey-man, she added, pointing to the sky where the Zepps cruised :

"They'll 'ear yer !"

Now when early in the War we were doing our best to get recruits by propagandist efforts, with poster appeals such as "Your King and Country wants you," the picture of a comfortable villa with the caption : "Is this worth fighting for ?" and so on, the number of volunteers proved very disappointing. Of course, some of these poster efforts were misdirected. I shall not forget the sardonic grin I saw one day on the face of a Cockney fellow who, pointing to the prosperous-looking villa on the poster, remarked to his companion :

"Yer'll be lucky if ye're able to 'awk there when the War's owver !"

But the air-raids, intended in part to put the fear of God into the hearts of the British civilian

population, so far failed in this regard that they actually stimulated volunteers as nothing yet had done.

The German attitude of that time towards the psychology of the British nation was so mistaken that now, since there has been time for reflection, their statesmen admit that this method of attacking the courage of the civilian population was one of their greatest blunders. Their contempt for our national qualities was an error parallel with their assumption of superiority to us in the crafts of engineering and shipbuilding, which they regarded as one of their assets in favour of our defeat. Yet not very many years ago their knowledge of shipbuilding was negligible. It was from the firm of Harland and Wolff (the latter, of course, a German) that they acquired their skill of later years, and British workmen were invited to Germany to teach them our methods.

The late Alec Carlisle (famous as the builder of the *Titanic*, and for his breezy attitude to life and death that made him stipulate in his will that the "Merry Widow" waltz should be played at his funeral) was second-in-command to Lord Pirie in the management of the great Belfast shipbuilding yard, and was made much of by the Kaiser. He recounted to me once how, having been invited to dine with the Emperor, with Herr Ballin, the German shipping magnate, as a fellow-guest, the Kaiser ignored the German and persistently flattered Carlisle throughout the meal by deferring to him constantly :

"You know, Carlisle. . . ." "You agree, Carlisle ? "

But events were to prove the folly of despising the brains that had been picked, the courage and endurance that underlie British so-called phlegm.

Their first experiment with Zeppelins was to prove disastrous. The L 1 on its initial venture was lost in the North Sea in September 1913, with the Chief of the German Naval Airship Service among the missing. A second one was produced in October, but as it caught fire and was a total wreck, the loss of some of their ablest commanders was regarded very seriously. In spite of these misfortunes and the grave doubt of some of their naval leaders, the German people were all in favour of a policy of developing an aerial force.

England was awake to the probabilities of attacks from the air. Mr. Winston Churchill, as early as September 1914, insisted on the organisation of a proper defence. This included attacks on the enemy aircraft at their bases or as near as possible to their point of departure, a force of aeroplanes, on the East Coast in especial, gun defences at important points, and the subduing of lights in important centres likely to be attacked. This was a tall order at the beginning of September, but it certainly reflected great credit on the foresight of the First Lord.

Early in October 1914 the Dusseldorf shed was destroyed and with it went a new Zeppelin.

There was at this time in Germany considerable difference of opinion as to the advisability of air attacks on England. The Kaiser, with more humanity than some of his counsellors, made a request that these should be confined to military establishments such as arsenals, docks and shipyards, and that the City of London should be left alone. This met with the disapproval of naval and military commanders, of whom in particular Ludendorff was all out for terrorism. Meantime we were insufficiently prepared,

for all our main energies were directed to building up an adequate military force.

During October guns were erected on the Tower Bridge, in the Green Park, at Waterloo, the Temple, Nine Elms, Blackfriars, and other points of vantage. The order was given that no searchlights should be turned on and no guns fired without authority from headquarters.

Experiments were made to find what chance an airship would have of locating any specified building. Our flying men reported that, given a moonlit night, there was nothing to prevent a Zeppelin from reaching nearly enough any particular target. Given a dark night, however, the task was likely to be difficult. Our own best airmen were often badly out in their calculations.

Then a decision was made that the Zepps were to be gulled by a rearrangement of the lights in long thoroughfares, and by the illumination of normally dark patches to represent the lights o' London.

On October 1st, the Commissioner of Police issued an order that from sunset to sunrise all powerful lights must be extinguished, that all street lamps must be put out also, and that lights in general should be subdued. Two months later the further precaution was taken of stopping all advertising displays, the lights of which in themselves would have been a clue to the position of the West End.

At this period no one foresaw the likelihood of an attempt upon the Midlands. But the people of the East Coast were naturally much concerned, and, generally speaking, there was semi-darkness or utter darkness from Northumberland to Kent. At the Admiralty we were terribly uneasy about the naval

ports, where the anti-aircraft defences of the most exposed—such as Portsmouth, Dover, Woolwich, Portland and the Medway—were strengthened, and a reasonable supply of searchlights installed.

Now before the War many reports were spread about foreign aircraft flying over England in the dead of night, but the stories of these phantom visitors received little consideration at the time. However, in December after the outbreak of war, a German airship was seen off Hull one afternoon. As the bombardment of the Yorkshire coast by enemy warships took place on the following day, December 16th, every credence was placed in this story of the airship, which was in all probability reconnoitring in advance of the surprise attack. Clearly, Zeppelin stories could no longer be treated as a joke.

This raid from the sea, in which the gunboats were guided to the coast by enemy airships, and the resulting losses of civilian lives and damage to property, brought a new danger home to us. When the matter was raised in the Cabinet the Home Secretary, Mr. Reginald McKenna, said :

“ The suffering caused by the casualties in the Hartlepoons, Scarboro’ and Whitby is forced into view. . . . In a Zeppelin raid upon some of the densely populated districts of London the loss of life would be infinitely more serious, and I am driven to the conclusion that such loss would be regarded as of vital importance by the civil population, whatever its military significance might be. At the present time the centre of London is fairly protected—that is to say, aircraft which attacked an area covering Westminster and the City would probably be destroyed. Outside this area there is no protection at all against

raids from the air, except such as may be afforded by aeroplanes whose activities are much limited by night. At the time when the Cabinet approved this limitation of the protected area no large supply of anti-aircraft guns was obtainable, but by now the shortage may have been made good, and the general question ought to be considered. . . .”

Shortly after this statement a German seaplane flew over the Thames on a reconnoitring mission and returned safely to her base. A few days later, a German aeroplane narrowly missed wrecking the Admiralty Pier at Dover, and this was followed by the dropping of bombs from another single plane near Dover Castle (fortunately without doing any important damage). These experimental attacks continued, and in this way the enemy tested our defences with a view to later and bigger attacks.

The German people were banking on the Zeppelins to aid in bringing about an early end of hostilities in their favour. At Friedrichshafen the manufacture of airships was going on at full pressure in order to get as many as possible in readiness for the beginning of the year 1915. From our own Secret Service we learned that in mid-January the Germans possessed no fewer than ten Zeppelin ships and that an attack on the East Coast was imminent.

40 O.B. was during these weeks continually expectant of some intercepted message from the East Coast listening stations that might give a clue to the intentions of the air-raiders. On January 19th, an enemy wireless communication reached them which when decoded signified that the first effort was to be made. The locality to be attacked was not mentioned and I still recall the breathless sensation with which

I learned that day that Yarmouth had been raided from the air. A few people were killed and some wounded, and the German people were much cheered by the exaggerated reports they received of the success of this first attempt on our civilian population.

A month later, however, L 3 and L 4, two of their best airships, got into difficulties, and our wireless intercepts clearly indicated that something was wrong. We learned later that a strong gale had sprung up and made a forced landing inevitable, both coming down in Denmark. One of them, released by her own buoyancy when her crew got out, rose rapidly and no trace of her was ever found again. What happened to the men who remained on the other airship is also a mystery.

Following on the January attack our lighting restrictions were tightened up still more, and extended to the whole of the East Coast and the South Coast as far as Plymouth. Indeed, the whole moot question of lights of every sort was carefully considered. The fact was not overlooked that the raiders might be guided up the Thames by certain lights and signals from neutral vessels, a form of betrayal at which some of them had been caught immediately after the declaration of war.

At an East Coast resort a certain German who had a yacht there was reported to have been seen out at night sending up flares by some device or other, and though he was considered suspect there was a tendency in the Intelligence Division to discredit this yarn. At this period, the beginning of the War, we had not quite realised that the mechanics of sensational spy fiction were in so many cases to become the methods applied to modern espionage. However,

one of our shrewdest naval officers was sent down to the place to do a little quiet scouting. He returned with positive proof of the German's suspicious behaviour, and the latter was promptly interned. He had a very nice yacht, too !

Notwithstanding the disasters of February, the Germans continued to clamour for a raid on London. But here again the Kaiser was not in complete agreement with popular feeling or the plans of the General Staff. These had perforce to be adapted to meet the Kaiser's conditions—that the air attacks were to have a military object only, and that the Tower of London was to be the limit of approach to the metropolis. As a matter of fact, it would, under certain conditions of atmosphere and light, have been impossible for the Zeppelin commanders to carry out these instructions strictly—but that remained to be proved.

In the middle of April bombs were dropped on Wallsend. On May 10th Southend received over a hundred bombs, which killed a woman, injured two men and damaged many houses. This of course scared away many visitors, and for the remainder of the War the hotels and boarding-houses had to pay the penalty which later on was fated to be met by Margate, and even more severely.

Naturally the loss to Yarmouth, Southend and Margate was Brighton's gain. "Jerusalem-by-sea" did well.

The raid on Margate occurred on May 17th, two people being killed. An hour later the Dover search-lights located the Zeppelin, which at once turned tail for home, having dropped about thirty bombs which did little or no damage. The reports of her visit, which we got from 40 O.B.'s wireless interception

of the airship's messages, were ridiculously wrong in estimating the damage she had inflicted. She was sent back again a week later, and once again, through our intercepts, we understood that London was her objective, but she got no farther than Southend, where she dropped about eighty bombs with some loss of life.

But five days later she was back again, and this time, the night of May 31st, she made straight for London. We were waiting for her, and as she crossed over Margate at half-past nine she was received with machine-gun fire. This, alas, proved an ineffectual gesture, for she was flying at such a height that no one saw her and very few people heard her engines. At half-past eleven she dropped her first bombs on Stoke Newington, and continued over East and South-East London, dropping a ton of bombs, which killed seven persons and injured about forty.

The next warning that a raid was impending received by 40 O.B. was on June 4th. The decoded messages showed that L 10 had left her shed at Nordholz at the same time as SL 3, but there was no certainty as to their destination.

The blow fell at Greenwich, where L 10 dropped bombs which injured six people more or less seriously. The SL 3 made for Hull, but after midnight this city was in total darkness and the bombs fell wide.

There was unfortunately no anti-aircraft defence at Hull. On June 6th the naval Zeppelin L 9 arrived over the town about midnight. She dropped over fifty bombs on a nerve-racked population. Twenty-four people were killed, many more were injured, several shops and houses were completely wrecked and others suffered damage and fire.

The inhabitants of this Yorkshire city had suffered enough, and grave riots broke out. It was only the intervention of the military that checked some of the most uncontrolled elements from wreaking their own form of vengeance on people who were alleged to be Germans or to be related to Germans.

On the same date three military airships had left Belgium with orders to join in the attack on England. Of these LZ 38 was forced by engine trouble to return to Eever, and there she was bombed and destroyed by naval pilots. The same fate met LZ 37 near Ostend on her homeward journey. The third one returned safely.

40 O.B. learned on June 15th that two airships had left Nordholz, and that one of them had been obliged to turn back with engine trouble. L 10 made straight for Northumberland, and began by dropping a shower of bombs on Wallsend. Everything was in her favour for this exploit : weather conditions were good, and the factories of Wallsend and the neighbouring industrial centres gave out a blaze of light. The Marine Engineering Works at Jarrow were badly damaged, and seventeen workmen were killed and nearly a hundred injured.

When the L 10 was on its way home we received a message intercepted from their wireless which related the ideal conditions for the raid : the moonless night, the lights of the factories, and the regrettable fact that there were no searchlights in action. The message continued to say that the commander, when thirty miles away from our coast on his homeward journey, could still see the glare of the reflected lights in the sky. What a target !

CHAPTER XV

AT last the Kaiser was forced, under pressure from the German General Staff, to consent to the bombing of the City. But he insisted on certain of his scruples being respected, and made a special condition that St. Paul's Cathedral should be unharmed. From this it will be seen that the reports of their prowess taken back by the Zeppelin commanders were fully credited in Germany, which was not then awake to the impossibility of accurately hitting any special target from so great a height.

The bombing of London then was planned for August 9th, and on the afternoon of that day five Zeppelins left their base. At the Admiralty we learned through 40 O.B.'s interception that the airships were reporting the presence of British cruisers in the Bight of Heligoland, and asking for orders. Were they to proceed according to plan or to be diverted for an attack on our Fleet? Soon further messages were brought to us from 40 O.B. : the original plan was to be carried out. L 9, L 10, L 11, L 12 and L 13 continued on their course.

This large-scale effort, the first of its kind, is only too well-remembered in this country, though by heaven's gracious mercy it was from the German point of view a failure. The Zeppelins all went wide of their mark, and from 8 p.m. onwards dropped bombs on various points of the East Coast, the nearest to their objective being the L 10, which arrived over

Shoeburyness at midnight. There the whole load of bombs was dropped under the impression that London had been reached, but these did very little damage.

The L 12 on the return journey fell into the sea near Zeebrugge, and after she was towed into Ostend she was fired by our naval pilots and almost completely destroyed.

Thus the concerted attack upon London which had roused high hopes in Germany ended in results which were discouraging to the Germans. It was decided therefore to make a second attempt in the hope of improving on the former, and the same fleet, save of course for the L 12, were sent off three days later. L 10 killed seven people and did much damage at Woodbridge, and caused injury to life and property by dropping high explosive and incendiary bombs on Parkeston, but this was the maximum success of the raid.

After these big efforts the German General Staff planned to keep up the raids with intensity with the hope of undermining the courage of the nation. A further big raid took place on August 17th over Walthamstow and Leyton.

Then our intercepts through 40 O.B. showed that there was friction between the German Military and Naval Commands. The reader will imagine the excitement that all of us who were in the secret of such happenings in the enemy world beyond the ken of the ordinary public experienced. Would the delicate balance of war machinery in Germany be upset by some conflict among the principal enemy commanders' or statesmen's wills? Would these disturbances of policy at least relieve us of the distressing results of their aerial campaign?

Alas, once again our hopes were doomed to disappointment, for in September they appeared to have come to a general agreement and their military airships took part in the next attack, September 7th. SL 2 flew over South-East London and killed eighteen people. Another airship did in fact reach the City, and dropped one bomb as she hovered over Fenchurch Street.

The report of this last commander induced another attempt while conditions were favourable. Shortly after noon on September 8th the German wireless was busy, and from four of the enemy airships 40 O.B. learned that they were using "H.V.B." as their cipher—that is, they were about to raid Great Britain. But approximately where remained to be seen.

London turned out to be their principal objective, though the L 9 was directed to the North-East Coast where the Skinnington Iron Works, erected before the War by German contractors, had been described to the commander along with its surroundings. Some of his incendiary bombs narrowly missed the benzol works, and one failed to explode close to a T.N.T. works—a terrifyingly narrow escape from a horrible fate for thousands of workpeople!

The L 13 with the famous airman, Commander Mathy, wreaked most of the havoc of that awful night. After being sighted over the coast of Yorkshire he made for London, passed over Cambridge, and entered the London area through Golders Green, Euston, Gray's Inn Road, and on to Liverpool Street and Norton Folgate. All along this route he reported by wireless enormous damage to life and property. Our anti-aircraft guns failed to make any impression

on him, his reason, given later, being that when the first gun was fired he was at a height of some 9000 feet, but as some of the shells nearly caught him he gradually rose another 2000 feet and was there quite safe.

Upon his return, however, he somewhat curbed the enthusiasm of the Zeppelin adherents by informing them that in future London would not be such an easy target. He was right. These attacks roused our authorities. The Press raged. A committee was formed to develop more efficient defences, and in October the London Mobile Section was formed.

Against our strengthened defences the raids continued with varying results, but meantime the German terrorists began to dread reprisals. These had, in fact, begun, and I well remember the story of one of the earliest of these attacks on our part as told me by the chief participant. This was my friend Naval Instructor Cummins who arrived at the Admiralty one evening after spending some not altogether painless hours in the dentist's chair.

"I think I'm rather a fool to bother about my teeth," he said laughing. "What's the point of getting them put in order now, just when they're likely to be smashed to bits by my getting a 'brick on the head' in a day or two?"

He was leaving that night for France, where he was to undertake bombing operations, and later I heard the sequel. On arrival he received instructions to bomb certain works near the German border. When he was over Dusseldorf—which was not his destination—he was flying so low that he could actually feel the heat of the furnaces. He flew round and round, making observations, but could not see

any anti-aircraft guns, and, overcome by the temptation, he dropped the whole of his bombs into the works. His commanding officer, when Cummins reported this to him, approved, and told him to make a return visit the following night—a visit which practically destroyed the munitions factory.

The German General Staff then realised that the obvious tit-for-tat had begun, and a suggestion was put forward that, if we would give an undertaking not to bomb the open towns of Germany they in turn would leave the City of London alone. The German Naval Staff, however, was opposed to this idea, and the need for greater efficiency in the defences of London was deemed imperative by our authorities.

The elaborated defence scheme was well thought out as a result of Admiralty and War Office conferences, and in addition to supplementing the mobile guns cordons of ground observers, additional planes and searchlights at vital points were arranged. But now we began to suspect that enemy agents—and there were a good few in London who had not yet been caught—had got wind of this new defence scheme. We had to combat this leakage by issuing bogus orders for their deception.

The raids meantime continued at intervals, and on October 13th shortly after 5 p.m., 40 O.B. decoded a wireless message which showed that a serious raid was pending. Five airships, including L 15, the new Zeppelin, whose inclusion we had been forewarned of by one of our secret agents in Holland, took part in this raid, which was up to the moment the biggest effort yet made against London. This destructive attack is only too well remembered. It was on this night that L 15 “blooded” herself by killing

seventeen people in range of the Lyceum, four near the Strand Theatre, and injuring seventy very seriously, besides wrecking many buildings. And while all our defences were concentrated against this one airship, the other Zepps did much damage and slaughter in the neighbouring counties.

It was indeed a fearful night. Seventy-one people were killed, and over a hundred and twenty people so badly hurt that probably few of them now survive to tell the tale.

After this there was peace for a few months. But at the end of January 1916 wireless intercepts decoded by 40 O.B. (an easy task of a few minutes only, as the raiders had "only H.V.B. on board") served as a warning of a serious attack on Liverpool. On January 31st we learned that a complete "Armada" of Zepps had left their sheds about midday on this excursion. From their conversations en route we learned further that three of them had engine trouble and had abandoned the idea of reaching Liverpool. None of them, in fact, did succeed in bombing that city, though the Midland and the North suffered a dreadful experience from this scattered flotilla, and were infuriated when the sum total of casualties was announced to reach the numbers of seventy killed and about one hundred and twenty injured.

The Lights Order was promptly strengthened and enforced upon practically the whole of Great Britain, with the exception of the far northern and south-western districts. Code warnings of the approach and likely destination of enemy airships were formulated, but these did not altogether allay the nervousness of the public.

In March stricter orders were issued to minimise

noise. Already in the preceding December church bells and clocks had been dealt with—those at various places along the East and South Coasts being stopped daily after sunset. But now utter darkness and absolute silence appeared to be the desideratum. At the Admiralty Intelligence Division we were bombarded with suggestions for putting this into practice. Some of these were foolish in the extreme, and a fair sample of them was the demand from one correspondent that an order should be made to prohibit dogs from barking and boys from whistling !

On April 2nd a new moon was due. We were therefore on the alert for the enemy to take advantage of the dark nights before that date. On March 31st the listening stations flashed to 40 O.B. an intercepted message in a new code—not unexpected by the deciphering department who had been aware of the preceding midnight signal of “silence,” which as I have said always anticipated a change of cipher. Suspecting, possibly, that the “H.V.B.” code was not too safe, the enemy doubtless thought to hamper any leakage of their communication by giving any eavesdropper a lengthy, if not impossible, task in decoding.

But long before the Zeppelins reached the coast the German code had been translated into plain English.

It was in this raid that L 15 was hit by our guns, and with a large rent in her side, crippled beyond recovery, fell into the sea close to the Knock Deep. Before she came down we found she had asked for assistance by her wireless, and was assured that the Zeebrugge destroyers would be quickly on the spot. But she was sinking fast, and in the middle of one

of our flotillas of net drifters one of the Zeppelin crew called out in perfect English :

" We have no arms and surrender. Please come alongside."

One man was drowned and the remainder of the crew were rescued, but L 15 suddenly sank while in tow near Westgate.

After this until the moonlit nights arrived there were almost daily raids. On April 2nd, 40 O.B. proved of invaluable assistance. From decoded messages we learned that four Zepps had left North Germany for a big raid and were heading north. At 5.30 p.m. the Admiralty decided to warn the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet and also the Admiral in control at Rosyth. The Admiralty's interpretation proved correct, for the airships attacked Newcastle-on-Tyne and Edinburgh and Leith, while military airships complicated matters by appearing over London.

Attacks were renewed under favourable conditions of darkness during the following days of early April, and again at the end of April and the beginning of May. On May 2nd we learned from directional wireless that seven Zepps were making for the North-East Coast. Fortunately they were hampered by weather conditions, and though they all reached important parts of the country—such as the Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough areas and the Forth—the only important results were the deaths of nine people and considerable damage at York.

Then came three months of blessed calm. Hopes ran high. Perhaps Germany had found her profit and loss account so much on the wrong side that she was abandoning this nerve-racking offensive from

the air. But no. On August 24th we learned from the German wireless that another raid was to take place. This was decoded so quickly that by 3 p.m. we were able to inform the Eastern Naval Command that there were twelve airships over the North Sea.

This was a fine instance of the success of our forewarning. Seaplanes and destroyers were at once ordered out from Harwich. The L 13 reported by wireless at about ten o'clock that she was hit. Later we learned that *Conquest* had been her successful attacker. The daring Mathy, however, with L 31 did considerable damage on the south side of the Thames, killing nine people, and injuring a number besides.

On September 2nd the German wireless was busy and we learned that another big raid was afoot. Shortly after 5 p.m. the Admiralty knew of the departure of eighteen airships—twelve naval and six military. This was the memorable occasion of the destruction by Lieutenant Robinson of the military airship SL 11, which came down at Cuffley. It was a scene which will ever haunt the memory of those who witnessed it.

Admiral Hall rushed to the scene as soon as news of the fall of the blazing Zeppelin reached him, but by the time he reached Cuffley the wreckage had burned itself out. I myself witnessed the raid from a short distance away, and was thrilled when, after what seemed an interminable period of bursting shells, occasional flashes of light in the sky, and the deep boom of guns, there suddenly appeared in the heavens the facsimile of a lighted cigar. Suddenly the cigar seemed to shoot through the sky like a falling star, and then from earth there rose a flaming

light like a haystack on fire. It was, as I have said, an unforgettable sight.

Other invading Zepps, who saw the fate of SL 11, made for home as quickly as possible, and England hoped that the possible demoralisation of their commanders might stem the tide of air raids.

However, the German High Command pressed on with the campaign, and at the end of the month the raids began again. September 23rd was for our defence a night of triumphs. It was on this night that Lieutenant Sowrey, on air patrol, brought down the L 32 at Billericay, where the flaming mass burned for an hour and destroyed the airship's crew. On this night, too, L 33, attacked by our guns and an aeroplane, came down near Wigborough and became a trophy of war. This was a great scoop, for the vessel, one of Germany's newest Zeppelin models, had suffered only comparatively little damage.

But against this we had to balance the depredations of the German ace, Mathy, who worked much havoc in the London area, killing twenty-two people and seriously injuring over seventy. Our defence was hopelessly impeded by the prevailing mist, under cover of which Mathy got away.

Two days later another devastating raid took place, in which this most dreaded of German commanders actually managed to reach Portsmouth, where he flew over the Dockyard, his bombs, however, fortunately falling into the sea. But Mathy's end was near.

On October 1st Sec.-Lieut. Tempest brought the L 31 down at Potters Bar. Invidious though it may seem to elaborate this deed to the exclusion of those other heroic feats of our Air Force, the vividness of

his description of his experience tempts me to quote it in part.

“About 11.45 p.m. I found myself over S.W. London at an altitude of 14,000 feet. . . . I was gazing towards the N.E. of London, where the fog was not so heavy, when I noticed all the search-lights in that quarter concentrated in an enormous pyramid. Following them to the apex I saw a small cigar-shaped object, which I at once realised as a Zeppelin, about 15 miles away, and heading straight for London. . . . At first I drew near to my object very rapidly. . . . I was having an extremely unpleasant time, as to get to the Zeppelin I had to pass through a very inferno of bursting shells from the A.A. guns below. All at once it appeared to me that the Zeppelin must have sighted me, for she dropped all her bombs in one volley, swung round, tilted up her nose, and proceeded to race away rapidly rising northwards. At the time of dropping her bombs I judged her to be at an altitude of 11,500 feet. . . . I made after her at all speed at about 15,000 feet altitude. . . . At this period the A.A. fire was intense, and I being about five miles behind the Zeppelin had an extremely uncomfortable time. . . . As I drew up with the Zeppelin, to my relief I found that I was free from A.A. fire, for the nearest shells bursting were nearly three miles away. The Zeppelin was now nearly 15,000 feet high and mounting rapidly. I therefore decided to dive at her, for although I had a slight advantage in speed she was climbing like a rocket and leaving me standing.

“I accordingly gave a tremendous pump at my

petrol tank and dived straight at her, firing a burst straight into her as I came. I let her have another burst as I passed under her and then, banking my machine over, sat under her tail, and flying underneath her pumped lead into her for all I was worth. I could see tracer bullets flying from her in all directions, but I was too close under her for her to concentrate upon me.

"As I was firing I noticed her begin to go red inside like a Chinese lantern, and then a flame shot out of the front part of her and I realised she was on fire. She then shot up about 200 feet, paused, and came roaring straight down on me before I had time to get out of the way. I nose-dived for all I was worth, with the Zeppelin tearing after me, and expected every minute to be engulfed in the flames. I put my machine into a spin, and just managed to corkscrew out of the way as she shot past me like a roaring furnace. I righted my machine and watched her hit the ground with a shower of sparks. I then proceeded to fire off dozens of Very's lights in the exuberance of my feelings. . . . I then commenced to feel very sick and giddy and exhausted, and had considerable difficulty in finding my way to the ground through the fog and landing, in doing which I crashed and cut my head on my machine-gun."

A vital picture of what both sides were compelled to endure in this terrible war in the air. Perhaps—who knows?—for Heinrich Mathy this was the kind of end he would have wished. But the ghastly death of the dare-devil German commander did much to undermine the morale of his fellow-commanders, as

we learned from our own secret service in Germany's neutral neighbours. The demonstration they had had in the past few weeks of our increasingly strong defences went home.

However, the German public, paying for this colossally expensive form of attack on Great Britain and hoping and believing in its ultimate success, had to be appeased. The raids were resumed. Two Zeppelins were destroyed in an attack on November 27th, and our own confidence was restored in our capacity to protect our island from this menace.

The damage to life and property had been enormous and tragic. But Germany had never succeeded in realising one of her main objects in carrying on these raids—the terrorism of the British people. Our morale was not affected. On the other hand, our people were braced up to a continuance of the War which should avenge these cruel attacks. I think, indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of thousands of recruits were made as a direct result of this offensive against a civilian population.

CHAPTER XVI

IN the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him. . . ."

I used often to think of those deeply dramatic verses from the Book of Daniel while working in the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty. For there was one room the walls of which bore startling evidence of the fate of the two great maritime Powers who were at deadly grips with one another for the prize—as we then imagined, whatever we may think now—of world supremacy.

England and Germany, the two great Anglo-Saxon races, believed that for weal or woe one day their respective naval establishments, the Grand Fleet and High Seas Fleet, would meet with the sovereignty of the oceans of the world as the prize of that tremendous encounter. Meantime we had our index, almost daily changing, of the respective strengths of their Navy and our own.

A chart was kept at the Admiralty which showed the curve of sinkings, new construction and repairs. Very few people were privileged to see that chart, which at one period looked, I must confess, uncommonly like "the writing on the wall." There was

even a bar up against several people who were otherwise right inside affairs, including various Cabinet Ministers—this precaution being taken in the case of those who had wives !

A few weeks after Germany started her unrestricted submarine campaign our losses in tonnage became pretty serious, and became more serious still as time went on. Our chart showed that in construction and repairs we were by no means keeping pace with the wholesale destruction. Admiral Hall therefore sent me on a journey throughout the country to enquire into the cause of the apparently endless strikes that were largely responsible for our deficiency in this regard.

As far as our Allies were concerned we had to make the best of a deplorable situation by diplomatic lying. If the French had known the truth, they would doubtless have pointed to Clemenceau's technique of ending this obstructive conduct at the time of the big strike at the Daimler works in Paris. "The Tiger" had just returned from the trenches.

"All in favour of a strike take places to the right. All against to the left," was his order.

He was quite amiable about it all, and when the men had separated in the division he merely said : "Thank you."

But all those who had moved to the right were in the trenches in no time !

Our plight at this time is clearly indicated by the figures given by Admiral von Scheer dealing with the world's shipping, the majority of which may be presumed to be British vessels. In February 1917 he claims that he sank 780,000 tons, in March 885,000 tons, and in April and June over 1,000,000

tons. This average was more or less maintained until the end of the year, when our anti-submarine devices were put into operation and considerably reduced the figure.

The situation was almost desperate by November, when Lord Jellicoe arrived at the Admiralty. He was out to face facts, and facts he would have. These plainly showed that the reserve food was quite insufficient in face of this destruction of our merchant ships by the enemy submarines. Admiral Jellicoe was fully aware of the strikes which delayed ship-building, and he was extremely doubtful whether we could pull through with this terrible handicap.

Officially, of course, the Admiralty could not be held responsible either for the building of merchant ships or for the supply of food to the country.

During the War I made many journeys throughout the country on a mission of observation of the morale of the civilian population. The most strenuous of these tours was made at a time when Scotland Yard had reported that a revolution was imminent.

This report was confirmed for Scotland Yard by the statements of many of the Chief Constables, among whom those at Cardiff and Glasgow were the greatest alarmists. I therefore made Bristol my first centre of enquiry, and moved on from there to Cardiff, Birmingham, Nottingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle and Glasgow, making the return journey via Lancashire, in which county I visited the chief industrial centres of the congested southern area.

Although there proved to be considerable reason for the police uneasiness concerning Cardiff and Glasgow, I was able to reassure the Government that the revolutionary attitude of the people was

mainly confined locally to these centres, and was not a general tendency affecting the greater part of the country. Certainly I found that the population was suffering from deep depression of spirits—not to be wondered at in view of the losses in so many homes of those near and dear to them, to which was added the gloom and unrest caused by the strict censorship of letters from the Front. The shortage of food too was an inevitable factor in lowering the general physical well-being, with its accompanying mental reaction.

Nevertheless, I found that the provinces were more abundantly supplied with food than was London, which was at this time nearly starving. On the other hand the people were less finicky about the quality of their supplies. I shall never forget the scene in the market-place on a Saturday night in Sheffield, when women crowded round the meat-stalls eating chunks of raw horse-flesh in their hands and seasoning it with pinches of salt which the vendors supplied for the purpose.

Sheffield, with lights out in case of a Zeppelin raid, was a somewhat dangerous spot in those days. The manager of the hotel where I put up advised me not to go out after 8 p.m., for, he explained, no one was safe in the side streets after that hour. I can still hardly believe it, but I was forced to assume that he knew what he was talking about.

The women of the industrial centres everywhere were, I could not fail to notice, having the time of their lives. Their wages had never been so good nor their responsibilities less, and many of them would not have minded, I think, if the War had lasted until the crack o' doom. There was a boom in fur coats,

and women and girls who had never before known any apparel but the ubiquitous shawl were now thronging the northern streets looking like so many teddy bears. In Lancashire I saw many who went to their daily work dressed in fur coats and clogs!

Luxury and undreamed-of enjoyments became the order of the day for a small, a more feckless and less foresighted section of the proletariat. Girls in their teens came from the slums of far-off towns and from distant villages to earn in the munition centres wages far in excess of the wildest dreams of avarice. And while for the most part the respectable middle and responsible working classes were economising either by compulsion or for their nation's sake, this strange class of the New Rich squandered their substance in riotous living.

In the Midlands, I was told, the piano trade had an amazing boom. It was not that a new love of music had sprung up among the *hoi polloi*. Merely that some of these emergent capitalists considered the possession of a piano as a badge of prosperity. And at the instigation of the dealers, they began to vie with one another in the owning of celebrated makes.

A friend of mine told me of two working-men arguing the respective merits of Chappells and Bechsteins in a local train near Birmingham.

"Well, I reckon Chappells is the best make," said the owner of the English instrument. "Why you can see to shave in the front of my pianner!"

Once when I had occasion to call at a music store in Birmingham I found the manager deploring the fact that he could not increase the number of his

cubicles in which intending purchasers sampled gramophone records.

"Can't get building done for love nor money, of course," he grumbled. "I could do with twice as big premises now. Come up and have a look."

I was astonished to find his store-room, show-room, offices and every available corner filled with gramophones, the noises from which competed with one another so that there was an incredible row. Silk-stockinged young things and elderly men seemed to form the type of customer, all waiting, patiently and otherwise, for their turn. "Table grands," the manager explained, were selling faster than the makers, crippled as they were, could turn them out. I left reflecting on life's ups and downs as wartime conditions magnified them; in one artisan's house the cheery sound of popular airs from this new toy, in the next, more than likely, the sobs of the newly-widowed and fatherless.

In another munition town a lady of my acquaintance was shopping at a greengrocer's when several working-girls came in. Owing to convoy difficulties and sinkings, the price of imported fruits had risen prohibitively, but this particular shop boasted a fine show of pineapples. My friend asked the price, but when told that the pines cost half a guinea each she shook her head and said :

"I'm afraid that is more than I can afford."

As she left the shop she heard one of the munitionettes say :

"I'll take one of them things, mister, if you'll tell us 'ow to cook it !"

War time must have considerably loosened the habits of the Scots, if Glasgow could be taken as

typical of North Britain. Having been brought up on the legend of the strict sabbatarianism of that country, I was amazed by the scene I witnessed one Sunday morning on Glasgow Green. There were gathered crowds of idlers, enjoying the varied diversions offered by the presence of the Salvation Army, a Catholic meeting, an anti-Catholic meeting, Labour speakers, conscientious objectors, "Stop the War" advocates, racing touts, hawkers and every imaginable kind of sponger on human credulity.

A black man was doing a roaring trade in pills guaranteed to cure any complaint under the sun. Nearby was a blind man who started a harangue, its theme being quite undiscoverable, at 10 a.m., continued throughout the morning, and was still hoarsely carrying on when I returned to have a look at the evening gathering. He was then making a general attack on the Royal Family with dark references to famous murderers such as Palmer the poisoner. A racing tipster dressed as a jockey had an "absolute cert. for Wednesday" which "nothing but an act of God could beat." A Scottish woman deemed this to be taking the name of the Lord in vain, and yelled out angrily :

"I hope the Lord will throw brimstone on you !"

When the man riposted with a ribald remark at the woman's expense, she broke through the cordon of spectators and caught him by the throat. I think the tipster would have got the worst of it if his friends had not come to his rescue and dragged the irate female away. However, it seemed to serve as good publicity for him, for his business in sixpenny tips briskened up astonishingly as I looked on.

An alleged psychological expert was a near neigh-

bour of the tipster. He opened the ball by throwing down his cap, striking a posture worthy of H. B. Irving, and then pacing up and down his pitch with the intent, yet unseeing gaze of the sleepwalker. His absurd and illogical harangue was made with such a dramatic and convincing air that he gathered one of the biggest audiences on the ground.

"The Irish," he began, "have a wonderful gift for psychology. Have you, the Scotch, got it?" The question was uttered almost threateningly. "Now let me give you a striking instance of the value of this talent. One dark night I was posted behind a tombstone in a graveyard in France with orders not to fire under any consideration unless I saw more German troops than were expected. Close to me was an Irishman with, of course, the same instructions. In the dead of night a dim figure approached. Without hesitation both of us fired at the same instant. We had used our gift of psychology and so had saved our troops from a surprise attack, for behind the advance guard there proved to be a tremendous enemy force."

A Jack-tar behind me gave a sudden guffaw, but the rest of the audience listened admiringly. The "expert" repeated his talk for three hours, but never attempted to make any collection or produce any pamphlets, and I have occasionally wondered what his motive was.

During this same tour, by the way, I came across an attractive woman who was staying in the same hotel in Liverpool as myself, and with whom I drifted into casual conversation. She spoke English perfectly, though with the slightest trace of a foreign accent, and it was perhaps this latter fact that made

me ruminate over the curiosity she betrayed about Ireland and the conditions then obtaining in that storm-tossed country. She revealed a sympathy with Germany that would have been disloyal in an English-woman, and next morning I asked the proper authority to enquire into her antecedents. The sequel to their enquiries was the lady's prompt internment.

One important factor in creating a war mentality during the early days of the War, when the public were still in some doubt as to the why and the wherefore, was the information concerning the behaviour of the advancing German troops. Atrocity stories have always, of course, been a sequel to every war, and naturally partisanship colours the actual happenings vividly.

While many of the atrocity stories have been discounted when fuller knowledge became available, the fact that the brutal military system of pre-War Germany produced some horrible results is not affected. The caste system was rigid both in the enemy Army and Navy. I have talked with German naval men on many occasions, and found that the lower ratings were resentful of the harsh treatment meted out to them by the great majority of their officer class. The men were, indeed, in the ex-Kaiser's eloquent phrase, mere "cannon fodder."

But in treating their common soldiers and A.B.'s like brutes, the apostles of the doctrine of "might is right" made a rod for their own backs.

On the whole the German Navy came off very much better in regard to humanity and the decencies of war. There were comparatively few black marks against the German seamen, even when the High Command ordered ruthless sea warfare. Nothing

can be brought against them comparable, for example, with the ghastly atrocity which the late Lady Denbigh reported from the Western Front. I well recall the horror which her letter evoked at the time. The following is a quotation from this tragic document :

“ . . . As to the other matter I do not know what to advise. It certainly is a difficult question to touch. In the case Lord —— interviewed, the old Revd. Mother said the officers were at first most civil and nice—then went into the town—all came back drunk and uncontrollable—she summoned nuns and children, told them what must happen—that they could only submit in sinlessness and offer their shame, as Christ offered His nakedness and suffering, for their country, in atonement for past sins and to draw blessings on it eventually. She begged Lord —— not to prosecute enquiries further, but to cover them from publicity, ‘ for,’ she added, ‘ they must have been very drunk since I who am seventy-two and told them so did not escape.’

“ I think that if this were handled with a sympathetic pen, pointing out the deep purity which overrides what in other circumstances would have been shame—but now rises to the heights of heroism, like unto the shame Christ suffered—good would be done and the chivalry of Ireland for purity in women be roused. No names should be given of the martyrs, but only of those who witness to the truth of having heard the narrative.

“ If Cawnpore carried our troops to such heroic victory, surely this tale of heroic suffering and oblation should rouse Catholic Ireland.

“ Perhaps you think I should not write so plainly, but just as ignorance is not innocence, so innocence can triumph over the foulness of sin and emerge the purer. I think these women and girls more saintly than many a protected woman.

“ Act as you think best.

C. M. DENBIGH.”

This and other less horrible reports steeled the minds of the public to the grim task ahead. They were indeed a powerful factor in creating the national will to victory, which after all is another way of describing morale.

Perhaps more than by any other factors that contributed to the depression of the civilian population during the War we were affected by the obstacles put in the way of our national habits. The British working-man must have his beer, his accustomed sports, his little bets. These being denied him, hard work and fair words offer him but small compensation.

Practically all sports had been cut off from this sport-loving nation, most of the public-houses were closed, and so the average workman became an easy prey to agitators. The teetotal cranks got their teeth into the Cabinet with a vengeance !

“ England sober,” they argued, “ means victory.”

Specialists in Harley Street contributed interviews to the Press in which they urged that oatmeal-and-water was better than beer—a healthy and effective substitute. This contention, just as every argument against the working-man’s beer, left the people cold.

I remember one well-intentioned lady scientist addressing a group of workers in an industrial centre on the theme that hot water and sugar was equal as

a stimulant to beer. She gave the exact proportions, which were, I think, a teacupful of the sweet beverage as the equivalent of a pint of ale—and it would take the pencil of a Belcher to reproduce the expressions of disgust on the faces of her hearers. My own pencil could, I admit, reproduce their muttered comments—but they would not pass the printer !

Even Government beer—which they described as water with the smell of a brewery !—was hailed in those days with pleasure by the British workman. At the London termini the railway trucks frequently arrived with this legend chalked on their sides : **WE WANT MORE BEER !** In my various tours of inspection through the country, I made some discoveries that were an eye-opener to Scotland Yard and our Intelligence Division.

I found that, failing the national beverage, the people were seizing upon any alcoholic drink they could get, regardless of its poor quality. The vilest and most poisonous of sherry, port and whisky were being consumed.

Much of the last was Irish potheen, which in Ireland is regarded as the shortest cut to a lunatic asylum, and out of which an opportunist Irishman made, I afterwards learned, pretty nearly a million pounds. He found his market, anyway, and after the consumers had taken a few “spots” of this so-called “proprietary” whisky, with the subsequent splitting headaches, the agitators had small trouble in getting a quick response to their “down tools” suggestion.

In Yorkshire I needed no convincing that the oatmeal-and-water proposition would cut no ice with the toilers of the great centres. Lights were then

subdued in that district because of the Zeppelin raids. I watched the furnace men at Rotherham trudge home through the awful gloom, often with no mate to chat with, and perhaps at home a disgruntled wife awaiting, who, sunk in her own domestic difficulties, was quite unable to visualise the general needs of a nation at war.

In the industrial centres there were touts who were paid to give the first news of the arrival of a barrel or two of this "Government beer." When a subdued light was seen in the "pub" there would already be a queue waiting outside. Once the doors were opened there would be a wild rush, and in record time the "Pig and Whistle" would have run dry. Later, the "glimmer of hope" might perhaps be seen in the "Nag's Head"—and the performance would be repeated. Some of the men would be content with a modest glass or two, but others, who objected to this rationing, would in sheer defiance get all they could before closing time—which didn't take long, of course, in those days.

This attempt at what was almost Prohibition in this country proved to be a double-edged weapon. The teetotal cranks had an undue influence with the Cabinet, who were too easily persuaded that a "dry" Great Britain meant a quick and complete victory.

The War was certainly prolonged by the constant strikes of the discontented workers. One of these strikes in particular was the cause of considerable delay in the production of vital anti-submarine devices, and the teetotalers actually had the audacity to attribute the unrest to *over*-drinking.

Reports from all over the country confirmed my

own observations, and as the Admiralty's view was backed up by Scotland Yard, strong representations were made to the Cabinet and a larger output of beer was agreed upon. From that day onwards there was a marked improvement in the work.

In addition we managed to get a few more small race-meetings which enlivened the people and gave them a chance of indulging in one of their familiar topics of common interest. The working-classes were longing for these indications of the familiarity and stability of their country. They were thus soothed and rested, happier and fitter to carry on their often arduous labours.

I remember seeing an example of this responsiveness when I was visiting Coventry. The newspapers had for a long time issued mainly posters concerning communiqués from the Front, and so tired of these had people become that a poster announcement of a British victory would constantly attract the sarcastic remark :

“ We've heard that many a time ! ”

But outside a Coventry munition works there suddenly appeared newspaper bills announcing : **ALL THE WINNERS.** The workers pouring out in their thousands literally pulled the journals out of the paper-boys' hands when their eyes fell on the placard. *Here* at last was something that really interested them !

Trivial though these factors of unrest may appear—and at the time did appear—in some eyes, they were in reality of great importance, and a due consideration of them made a great deal of difference to the morale of the workers. Having put an end to much of the dissatisfaction we got better and quicker work, and

the speeding-up of certain elements resulted in the sinking of so many German submarines in 1918.

Consideration of the need to keep up the good spirits of the country extended to all classes, as witness the kindly thought given to the Empress Eugénie.

The ex-Empress Eugénie was, of course, keenly interested in the progress of the War, and with official permission we kept her informed as far as we could of the march of events. As she was a great personal friend of Their Majesties the King and Queen, I imagine that this compliment was extended to her for more reasons than one. At any rate, one of the King's gentlemen-in-waiting was periodically sent on a visit to the ex-Empress at her home at Farnborough in order to convey to her the respects of Their Majesties and at the same time give her a general summary of the situation in her beloved France.

Although she was well on in years when the War broke out, it was observed by her visitors at Farnborough that she had lost little of the playfulness of her younger days. One day when the King's gentleman-in-waiting had called upon her, he asked her why she did not go into her park on Sundays.

"But why," she replied, "should I interfere with loving couples? The population is dwindling enough as it is through the War."

About this period one of the Empress's ladies asked her if she would walk as far as the little wicket-gate, where she would see something of interest to her. They walked slowly along through the quiet domain to the gate. Suddenly the sound of marching troops was heard. The Empress pricked up her ears like an old war-horse, and watched eagerly. She recognised the

British Tommies at once. "But who are those?" she murmured as she saw in the centre of the squad a number of unarmed and stalwart men.

"They are prisoners from the Prussian Guard," whispered the lady-in-waiting.

The ex-Empress looked on quietly as they marched past, and then sighed and said in French :

"Thank God that I have lived to see such a sight !"

Her mind had flown back to Versailles and the Prussian generals of the Franco-Prussian War, and she returned to the house speaking with satisfaction of the slight compensation the march-past had afforded her.

I learned afterwards that the route past Farnborough had been ordered by the War Office specially to enhearten her by proving that France was by no means beaten.

My duties took me down to Portsmouth at one time soon after one of the early naval disasters—the torpedoing on September 22nd, 1914, of *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy*. While there I talked with a naval chaplain who described to me in poignant words the scenes in Portsmouth that night of rumour, and the heartbreak of the following day. No words of mine could paint the picture he made for me, and which will remain ever vivid in my mind.

I saw, by the way, that this chaplain was nearly worn out with the storm and stress of his duties and sympathetic emotion, and gathered too that he was personally concerned about a serious overdraft at his bank—largely due to his charity. He had very few wealthy friends on whom he could call at this juncture. Admiral Hall's slogan, "Quick action," echoed in my brain, and when I had left the clergyman I seized pen

and paper and wrote all the circumstances to an acquaintance who had been associated with public life in the Empire for many years."

When in Portsmouth again a few weeks later, I saw the chaplain once more. He told me that he had just received a letter from an anonymous correspondent enclosing bank-notes for a considerable sum.

"What good people there are in this world!" he said. "But who is the kindly soul? I cannot guess who can have sent such a miraculous sum." And he showed me the envelope, which revealed no more than that the letter had been posted in the London E.C. 4 district.

I knew, of course, who his benefactor was, but unless the clergyman's eyes happen to fall on this story, he will probably be left wondering.

During a particularly bad period on the Western Front, many wounded Scottish troops on their way north were held up at King's Cross on a bitterly cold night awaiting their train. A number of prosperous and well-dressed women had assembled, full of good intentions, to see the wounded men made as comfortable as possible. Clutching pet dogs to their expensive fur coats, prattling to one another in all the clichés of the moment ("The men are *wonderful*," " . . . splendid fellows," "our brave men," etc.), they "did their bit" by handing the unfortunate Jocks cups of tea to cheer them on their journey.

The sight was too much for George Moore. He forthwith wrote to the *Times* a disgusted letter which was headed: FLEA BAGS. This communication was given great prominence, and copied in a great part of the general Press. The day following the publication of this letter in the *Times* Mr. Moore met the late

Ralph Nevill, who umbrageously defended the ladies of Belgravia and Mayfair and assured the writer that after this insult they would never again read any books of his. This attack, as may be imagined, left George Moore entirely unperturbed.

However, his letter had a speedy and marked effect, for never again were the pet dogs taken out on these Good Samaritan expeditions.

CHAPTER XVII

IT seems strange that the British working-man's beer has always taken precedence in importance over his—and his wife's and children's—food. Both beer and bread have served as planks in many a political platform, but beer has always proved the sturdier. My investigations demonstrated that the leopard had not changed its spots. Not all the waiting queues of tired women and children, baskets and ration-cards in hand, nor the hungry looks of the family gathered round the meal table stirred the worker to such wrath as did the inhospitably closed doors of his favourite pub.

It was difficult, however, to make the housewife understand just why food supplies must be cut short. A strange ignorance concerning the War and its consequent disabilities pervaded a great part of the female population, and this was not confined to the poorer classes. Ralph Nevill told me of the extraordinary attitude taken up by an aunt of his, an elderly lady of Victorian standards of life, in this regard.

He went to see her one day some time after rationing had become compulsory. In her large house near Sloane Square he was horrified to find her in a terribly under-nourished state.

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But she was very indignant, very puzzled by the Government's odd behaviour. It was unreasonable, she argued, that she should be expected to stand in a queue at a store, and for her part she preferred to starve rather than suffer such an indignity.

Mr. Nevill tried to explain to her the necessity for curtailing food supplies. Then he tried another line, and told her how the King and Queen had their own ration-cards and adhered strictly to receiving no more than their share, and how all the aristocracy were compelled to accept the conditions. But his persuasiveness left the lady adamant. At last he said impatiently :

“ Well, there is a war on ! ”

“ Huh ! ” grunted the aunt. And then, pointing through the window to a policeman in the street, she added : “ If there's a war on, what is *he* doing ? ”

Her nephew gave her up as hopeless !

It was hardly credited, by the way, by numbers of the people with whom my tours brought me into contact, that not a drop of wine was consumed at Buckingham Palace during the whole course of the War—in spite of newspaper propaganda which set forth the example the Royal Family were thus setting. It was, however, perfectly true.

The peculiarly chaotic state into which the emotions of the female portion of the population were thrown was never better illustrated than in the unpleasant matter of the white feathers. The bestowal of these on men not in uniform and appearing of military age was made by women who in normal times might have seemed incapable of such extraordinary cruelty. Many a man, publicly branded time and time again by these symbols of cowardice, was driven into the

Army, fit or unfit, simply by his dread of this recurrent nuisance, and many stories have been told of the unfair advantage these women took over the, for once, defenceless male.

One instance in my own experience showed the victim coming through the ordeal in triumph, and without a word spoken on either side. I was dining in a well-known restaurant not a hundred miles from New Oxford Street. A middle-aged woman threaded her way between the tables with a white feather in her fingers. On her face was an expression of blatant defiance. All heads turned to watch her as she made her way to a small table where, dining with a pretty companion, sat a fresh-faced young fellow in civilian clothes, before whom the elderly woman laid the hateful feather.

The young man looked up at her for a second, startled, their eyes met, and then as she turned haughtily away he lifted up the feather and slipped it into his lapel button-hole. The diners in the restaurant were patently trying not to stare at him, though when a moment later he resumed his easy chatter with his companion, heads were certainly disposed to turn towards this cool young fellow. I was not sure where the general sympathy lay—with the marker or the marked.

At the end of his dinner the man bent, groping under the edge of his table, and then slowly rose, supporting himself on the crutches he had retrieved. One leg had been removed almost to the hip. As he walked out, still wearing the white feather, there were spontaneous murmurs of: "Good luck," and in answer to a question someone quietly put to him as he passed one of the tables, I saw his lips

shape the word "Mons." I saw, too, more than one pair of eyes fill suddenly with tears.

On another occasion, a young friend of mine whom I will call A., engaged on work of national importance in one of our East Coast ports, was strolling on the pier with an older confrère on similar work, when an angry-looking spinster-like female approached the pair. A. was suffering from serious heart trouble. B. was a veteran of many adventures, a gallant and buccaneering spirit who had fought, first on one side and then on the other, in the Russo-Japanese War, and who had in some encounter or other had the four fingers of one hand shot clean away. Selecting as her victim, for some obscure reason, the elder of the two, the woman handed him a white feather. B. took it with his "good" hand, bowed stiffly, and asked :

"For me?"

"For you, to teach you to do your duty," she replied.

Still holding the feather, B. enquired :

"And are you doing your duty, may I ask?"

"Certainly I am," replied the woman.

B.'s eyes ran pointedly over her unmaternal contours for a moment. Then he said very distinctly :

"Then allow me to congratulate you, madam, that it is not yet obvious."

The lady, I believe, beat a hasty retreat.

But, not to be unfair to the other sex, there were many instances in which the sympathies of the non-combatant men showed this same strange distortion caused by war conditions. One young fellow related to me his own somewhat embittering experience in this respect.

A cripple from childhood through early infantile

paralysis, he was fortunate enough to be of use in a clerical capacity during the war-time shortage. Making his way from his home by bus to his office was always a difficult process, made more laborious by a tendency to lose balance under certain conditions. For some weeks an elderly gentleman who used the same morning bus looked out for the cripple, helped him up the steps and into his seat, and insisted (quite superfluously, and in spite of protests) on paying his fare.

Suddenly one morning the kindly benefactor, who had perhaps refrained earlier from asking questions out of some delicate motive of not wishing to stir up unhappy memories, enquired :

“ Where were you wounded ? ”

“ Oh ! ” exclaimed the clerk, surprised at this new aspect of himself, “ I’m not a soldier. I’ve been like this since I was three years old.”

The other turned away his head, shocked, and from that moment on he completely ignored the cripple, to whom he did not even give in future so much as a nod of recognition—much more a helping hand on to the bus.

An R.N.V.R. officer who is a well-known peer and another gentleman, both in mufti, travelling one night from Paddington to Windsor by train, had to suffer a great deal of abuse and insulting remarks about shirkers and cowards from two women who were in the same compartment. At Windsor the Royal carriage was awaiting the arrival of a passenger on the train, and the two women joined the crowd of eager sightseers who were watching to see for whom the carriage was intended. They had the pleasure of seeing it bear away the two fellow-passengers whom

they had so gratuitously insulted, of whom the peer was that night on duty as Gentleman in Waiting to His Majesty. The joke, I was told, was much enjoyed at the Castle.

The mobilisation of a great army is a complicated and difficult matter, but the demobilisation of those who took part in the Great War must have taxed the best brains in Europe. Not only was it a gigantic task, even if the machinery worked perfectly, but it became more intricate because of flaws in the material on which the machinery was operating. There was a great deal of uneasiness in Great Britain immediately after the War, and upon more than one occasion the Cabinet, faced by disturbing reports from the Home Office and Scotland Yard, had to consider awkward contretemps.

After five years of concentrated work I had retired along with others holding posts "for the duration," and was settling down with the anticipation of enjoying a well-earned rest when the late Lord Long asked me to return to the Admiralty to carry out some special research for them. I had in 1917 and 1918 made a tour of the various naval ports in order to make exhaustive enquiries into the morale and conditions of life of the Lower Deck. My post-War duties, therefore, proved to be in the main of a similar nature, the intimate knowledge I had gained in the earlier years convincing the authorities that my services would exactly fill their emergency needs.

The question that exercised the Admiralty in 1919 was: "Is the morale of the Lower Deck breaking?" Various alarmist reports had been forwarded to them from Scotland Yard and the Home Office, and in view of the fact that the men had completed nearly

five years in the desolate surroundings of Scapa Flow, it seemed wise to enquire into these complaints.

Now, on my war-time tours of the naval ports I had at first had an uphill job. The Jack-tars were chary of talking to a civilian. Many of them, failing to understand the all-embracing scope of the censorship of letters, ignorantly believed that because their own epistles were censored they themselves must therefore be suspect. They proved wary birds indeed, but I managed to get at their hearts by talking boxing, football and other sports.

They would have shut up like oysters if they had had any inkling that I was a representative of the Admiralty.

They had had much to put up with. I had seen them forced into a position of some humiliation through no fault of their own when the American sailors were in the same ports, the latter able with their better pay to enter the "Saloon Bar" of the inns while those who had done the real fighting were obliged to congregate in the cheaper "Four Ale Bar."

On the whole I found them true to the best tradition of the British Navy, and had no reason to change this opinion on my further investigations after the War.

In 1918 I derived much pleasure, when I saw how badly they were treated, in seeing Admiral Sir Reginald Hall follow up his consideration of my report by making representations to the Cabinet which got for them an increased rate of pay and some of their own prize money, which had been too long delayed.

During this post-War (1919) year we received an innocent-looking communication addressed to the First Lord. The letter was anonymous, its attempted

bona fides statement that the writer had had long and honourable service in the British Navy giving us less than no clue to his identity! The writer said that he was somewhat diffident about reporting the matter, but felt he ought to warn the Admiralty that if precautions were not taken there would be a mutiny at Harwich. The troops, the letter continued, had learned that they were due to be moved from Harwich Barracks, and there would certainly be bloodshed if the authorities persisted in this transference.

The country was still suffering from war nerves, so that there might be some truth in the contents of this letter, and I was instructed to go to Harwich and see what I could discover. I had to be extremely cautious, and I spent a week in this port feeling my way among the men. By the end of that time I began to doubt the genuineness of the letter. Making due allowance for the habitual grouching of soldiers and sailors, I found nothing to imply a coming mutiny, and after considerable and discreet enquiry decided that the whole thing was a mare's-nest. But then—what was the explanation of the apparently well-intentioned and patriotic communication from the Jack-tar?

This problem seemed to demand a solution, but none was forthcoming. I had in fact given up the puzzle *pro tem.* when on my way to the station in order to return to London something in a shop window caught my eye. It was one of those shops chiefly patronised by service men. On the various articles displayed for sale in the window were the usual explanatory price-tickets, and it struck me that the handwriting on these was remarkably like that of the sailor's warning letter to the First Lord. I

entered and purchased a war souvenir, carefully asking for a written receipt.

As soon as I got access to the letter again I compared the handwritings, and could find little or no difference between them. The Admiralty were told of this surmise and the handwriting experts of Scotland Yard were consulted. Their report was that they believed the man who sold me the souvenir was the alleged sailor who was so keenly interested in the welfare of the British Empire !

This was followed up by further enquiry at Harwich, which elicited the fact that the shopkeeper was a man who did big business with the troops. Knowing that they were due to leave he had evolved this dramatic method of trying to frighten the authorities into maintaining this station for the troops who provided his meal-ticket.

One Saturday afternoon at the beginning of 1915 Sir John Baird (now Lord Stonehaven) had telephoned to the Admiralty asking to be put in touch with me. Lord Stonehaven was at that time secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. Bonar Law, to whom he had suggested that I should be sent to Ireland to report upon affairs there at that critical time. In consideration of the facts that I am Irish by birth, had friends in both camps, and must have acquired an Imperialistic outlook by my long residence in South Africa and contacts with such forces as Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Jameson, I was regarded as a highly suitable person for this delicate task.

By arrangement I met Lord Stonehaven and discussed the prospect with him. Briefly stated, the Prime Minister's wish was for a quite impartial description of the mood of Ireland where the Cabinet

could make no guess as to what was likely to happen and where, above all, they wanted to make a square deal. Underlying this was the Cabinet's appreciation of the importance of the relationship between Ireland and America, who was of course still standing pat on her neutrality.

After a conference between Lord Stonehaven and the D.N.I. it was arranged that I should leave for Ireland the following day, Sunday. All preparations were made, and with my baggage ready I called early in the morning at the counter-espionage office to receive final instructions. At noon, just as I was about to leave, I was informed that, with all respect for Mr. Bonar Law and his secretary, the Admiralty had decided that after all I could not be spared from my duties as D.N.I.'s secretary !

I still think that it was a pity that, in face of the Admiralty's decision, the Prime Minister did not at least find someone else suitably qualified for this investigation. At that time something might, I am convinced, have been accomplished in making for better understanding between Ireland and England, and so in avoiding the terrible events that the future was to hold for that distressed country. But the minds of the Cabinet were concentrated on the German hordes, and though cognisant of the importance of Ireland and America they left the problem in abeyance for the time being.

It was not until the War was ended that I was permitted to undertake a similar visit of enquiry to Ireland, when I visited Belfast to report on the progress of the alleged Soviet in that city.

Perhaps the most serious investigation that came my way during that year of 1919 concerned the state

of affairs in Belfast. Reports had been sent from that city that a Soviet had been established. The late Lord Long discussed my plan of action for several hours before I left for Ireland, for, remembering as he did the "Morley Riots," he wondered what the position would be if the British Government were again defied by the Nationalists and Orangemen, many of them now ex-service men. I was asked to be extremely careful about my conclusions.

In Belfast for the greater part of a month I mixed with all classes of people representing both parties, and found it no easy task, being an Irishman myself, to maintain a strictly non-partisan attitude in the face of so much violent opinion. Indeed, I was threatened more than once with sudden death! When every source of enquiry seemed to be exhausted I finally formed the opinion that a display of force was the only method of ending this Soviet threat.

One Saturday night there was handed in at Belfast, a message to a commonplace London address. The sender was ostensibly arranging a little flutter on the Turf.

That message was forwarded to its intended destination, the Admiralty. Next morning the Sabbath air of the streets of Belfast was queerly altered by the presence of soldiers and sailors, while over the principal buildings machine-guns had suddenly appeared. I must confess that the speed with which my report had been responded to took away my breath. No one knew where the armed force had come from nor how they had entered the city so quietly in the dead of night. But their presence did the trick! The dream of a Soviet in Belfast was ended.

CHAPTER XVIII

LOOKING back over these reminiscences of my years at the Admiralty I catch once more the thrill of those exciting days, and something of the strangeness of the varied personalities and the "many inventions" which made those years so memorable for me. I have tried to show how the gigantic machine worked from the point of view of one of the cogs. That it worked well, events have shown and history will acclaim in no still small voice.

As I have said before, a just recognition of the Royal Navy's contribution to the Allied victory is still to be paid. The Senior Service tackled all kinds of jobs under the most exacting conditions, with little time for experiment. Scarcely ever did it fail to "bring it off"—and the few failures were as honourable as they were ambitious.

With the accustomed generosity that distinguishes the English race we have given credit more lavishly than we have received it. The Allies had their meed of praise. As a civilian I have tried to show in this book that the brunt of the Intelligence work fell to Great Britain.

America is very cock-a-hoop nowadays about the U.S. Navy. But their service was vastly inferior to our own when eventually (and to the joy of their service officers and men of all ratings, I believe) their Government decided that the nation was not very proud after all, of being "too proud to fight."

Since the War their Fleet and its personnel have become the pets of a section of the American public. Some amusing stories have come to my ears of the misguided enthusiasm of some transatlantic supporters of the "bigger and better Navy" propaganda.

An English naval commander told me lately, for example, that at a dinner party at which he was a guest while over the other side of the Herring Pond a lady seated next to him told him what she considered a most circumstantial story of the part taken by the American battle-fleet in the Jutland engagement. He listened to her absurd yarn politely for a time. But at last his companion's boastfulness moved him from amusement to irritation. He spoke out bluntly, and told her that she was completely misinformed, not a single man nor a boat from the States having had any share whatever in the Battle of Jutland, which of course occurred before America had entered the War.

The lady was most indignant.

"I'm quite sure you're wrong, Commander," she said. "Why, I heard all about it in a lecture."

The officer did not try to gainsay this. For after all, his knowledge about Jutland was only obtained from personal experience! He had not attended any lectures in the Middle West!

In the sphere of intelligence as well as in the practical work of strategy, gunnery and so on, our own Senior Service proved a valuable example to the American allies. I met many senior officers of the United States Navy, and they had to confess that the Intelligence Division's work filled them with surprised admiration. As I have said, the department kept itself to itself even so far as our own statesmen

and the service were concerned. Our friends from the other side were naturally even less informed than the British. But as time went on they realised that a mysterious power was at work in their interest, and they were deeply grateful. Also inquisitive !

Admiral Sims, ignorant of the existence of 40 O.B., could never understand how our department came to be so accurately informed about the enemy agents who were working from America. It frequently happened that Admiral Hall found it necessary to mention to the American admiral or his staff some suspect or admittedly dangerous person on the other side of the Atlantic. Oftener than not the suspect had never been heard of by the U.S.A. officers, and when they pursued enquiries and found our Intelligence Division to be correct in every detail they spoke with some respect of what they considered to be our mysterious channels of investigation. But of 40 O.B. and its work of interception and deciphering they knew nothing—could know nothing, until Sir Alfred Ewing's public disclosure of a few years ago.

Admiral Sims was not long in winning the hearts of the British Navy. His consideration, courtesy and modest readiness to pass the supreme command over to us was an attitude that infected the men of his fleet and eased what might have been an embarrassing situation. He recognised that the British Navy had already suffered much and had a tremendous task on hand, and was willing to help in any conceivable direction.

I remember with pleasure a remark of his at the Admiralty which seemed to me typical of his attitude.

"Say, there's no necessity for any formality in addressing me," he explained. "Don't even bother

to write in ink. If you want a destroyer or two, a note in pencil will do ! ”

The American naval officers were as admirable in their attitude to the British Navy as was their Admiral. They never protested about anything, but were always ready to act upon any suggestion. No co-operation in the War was so whole-hearted as that of the American and British navies, and for this I think much thanks is due to Admiral Sims. It is not inconceivable that an American admiral in support of his country's prestige might have insisted upon a separate command, but the Admiral's broad and generous helpfulness practically put his fleet at our service.

Unfortunately there was not quite the same good feeling between the men of the two fleets. The reason for this is not far to seek. The arrival of the American sailors in this country sorely tried our Jack-tars, who were receiving totally inadequate pay, and were faced when in the same ports by the tantalising contrast of the comparative wealth of the others. Our men too had by that time kept the seas for three years, struggling to make ends meet on a mere pittance. The feeling between them would at times become very sour—especially when, visiting a favourite bar to indulge in typically nautical back-chat with the pretty barmaid, our Jacks would find themselves unable to get near the counter because the Americans had got there before them and meant to hold the fort till closing time !

Nowadays, however, the British sailor has a better deal. His pay is good, his occupation a desirable one, and his chances of snapping up the pretty barmaid as good as another's !



Central News

ADMIRAL SIMS
American Navy.



GENERAL PERSHING
American Army.

Topical Press

When the American fleet was stationed off Queens-town, Admiral Sims had a difficult incident to handle which, if injudiciously treated, might have had a tiresome sequel. His men came ashore and naturally began to enjoy themselves. A number of them attended a dance in a local hall, and they and the pretty Irish colleens quickly found themselves mutually attractive. The Irish lads resented the interference of the newcomers, and, even more, their obvious prosperity, for the U.S. sailors had money, and, as often happens, money talked ; it even sang love-songs. The Irish of the South are inclined to marry rather late in life, when they want a dowry with the bride—a custom that tends to give the man a certain conceit of himself and an attitude of superiority to the other sex. And here were the Irish girls blandly ignoring them and preening themselves before the love-making and banter of their well-paid American partners. The fat was soon in the fire !

The dancers were swinging round to the tune of " The Merry Widow " waltz when a big youth from Tipperary opened hostilities.

" Too proud to fight, aren't you ? " he shouted to one of the American sailors as the latter danced past him with a partner for the lack of whom the Irish lad leaned neglected against the wall of the room. " Then hold that ! " And the enraged son of Ireland landed a veritable pile-driver on the Yankee's nose. The storm broke loose.

One man entered the hall and asked :

" Is this fight faction or gin'ral ? "

Now, this question, when asked in the South of Ireland, means—so Lord Carson once said—hell let loose. The scene soon resembled a Cahirciveen fair.

The brawny lads of County Cork relied upon their stout fists, but the American sailors preferred bottles and chairs, and the colleens fled from the hall at the sight, leaving the males to settle the issue for themselves. For two hours the fight was "gin'ral," and the dance-hall was practically wrecked.

The sailors got the worst of it, according to Admiral Sims, who reported a somewhat alarming list of casualties when he submitted the case to the First Sea Lord for advice. I think the Admiralty rather enjoyed the account of this inter-Allied engagement, for the reply to Admiral Sims was the pacific suggestion that he should not allow his men ashore until the Irish temper had cooled down ! It amused many of us to think that the American A.B.s had had to get quarter-deck advice to settle their differences with their rivals in love. Our own Tars would certainly have managed without any such expert assistance.

Among other odd jobs to which the naval authorities had to turn their attention was that of decorative art. Just as the gay red coats of Waterloo and Inkermann gave place to the drab khaki of the Tugela River scrap and the Mons retreat, so the brave display of the old wooden walls with the gaudy figureheads and rakish lines was replaced by grey steel ships. And these sought by every trick that imagination could conceive to blend with the mists and deceptive tones of sea and sky. In a word, the Navy had to turn artist—and a very subtle artist at that.

I saw some of the early experiments in actual progress, and the success of the Admiralty as a temporary rival of Burlington House is now a matter of common knowledge.

When in November 1918 the formal surrender of

the German Fleet was scheduled, it was suggested that there should be a picture of that historic scene, and Sir John Lavery, a fellow-townsmen of mine, by the way, was commissioned to carry out the task. As he was not, of course, a naval officer, he was made a temporary one for the occasion, so as to avoid giving any offence to the German officers. I must admit that even when he donned the uniform so quickly prepared for him by Gieve's he did not look much like a naval officer !

He travelled rapidly up north, where he was accommodated on *Queen Elizabeth* for the purpose of getting his impression of the surrender of Admiral von Meurer with the German Fleet. Very fortunately for this famous picture, visibility, which had been very low when the High Seas Fleet arrived at Scapa Flow, improved just in time, or a memorable opportunity would have been lost.

The principal German officers were received on the quarter-deck of *Queen Elizabeth*. Sir John was carefully posted in a position where he could not possibly be seen, electric lights intervened between him and Admiral von Meurer, and as a further precaution he was surrounded with a large barrage of flowers.

Afterwards he made sketches of the conferences between the British and German officers, being skilfully camouflaged on each occasion, so that he might get the natural expressions of their faces.

Sir John Lavery, as may be remembered, had a unique connection with the Admiralty. I remember how one day soon after the Battle of the Falkland Islands a naval lieutenant, who was visiting my room on business, remarked :

“ There’s a countryman of yours, an elderly fellow wearing an apron, down in the basement doing something mysterious. He is splashing all sorts of stuff from a whitewash brush on to a large canvas.”

The “ elderly fellow wearing an apron ” was Sir John, and he was engaged in serious research into the potentialities of camouflage. Naturally every facility was given to the artist ; when the room in which he was working proved to be too small for his purpose, a wall was promptly knocked down for his convenience.

Sir John Lavery’s work was based on a theory he had evolved through an observation he had made one evening in the Zoological Gardens, when he found it very difficult to distinguish by twilight between a donkey and a zebra. From this he developed his idea of the “ Q ” boats. When he had made a rough painting of a ship, he got some naval officers to view the work with the naked eye from a distance of a hundred yards or so and to tell him what type of vessel they thought it was. Their report was unanimous.

“ Any old damned ship,” they said.

He carried on his work on the canvas and then asked the onlookers to retire to a greater distance, say, about half-way to Buckingham Palace, and there to make observations with powerful glasses. Again they were baffled.

The officers were, of course, sworn to keep this “ pink ” (secret) throughout, and then were put to a further test. This time they reported that not only could they not discern what sort of ship Sir John’s painting represented, but they had not the foggiest idea as to which was stem and which was stern ! The

artist had arranged the smoke boxes in such a way that the vessel might be emitting smoke from the stem, so that there was no clue to the course she was taking.

To revert to the débâcle of Germany's ambitions as a sea-power, I am reminded of a story told me by an eye-witness.

When the German submarines surrendered outside Harwich a German officer, overcome by passion, said to a British petty officer :

" I will tell you what I think of you and your British flag."

He then spat viciously into the sea. The Britisher made no retort.

Angrier than before, the German spat again into the sea, saying : " That is what I think of you and your Beatty ! "

Our man looked at him for a moment. Then he replied quietly :

" I sympathise with your feelings as a Hun, but don't spit in our sea."

In reviewing the memorable features of the great naval clash at Jutland, an odd incident comes to my mind—an incident that, like a stone thrown into a pool, spread its influence from small to ever-widening circles of those in authority over the national fate.

In April 1915 an Italian naval officer arrived at the Intelligence Division one afternoon and asked to see the D.N.I. Italy, it will be remembered, was not then at war with Austria or Germany. The officer was told that Admiral Hall was not in at that moment, and he was clearly both disappointed and distressed that he could not see him, explaining that he was leaving for the Continent that night.

He had such an obviously authoritative air that an old and reliable naval messenger who had been long in the service, suggested that he should see the Admiral's secretary, who could be trusted implicitly. He came, therefore, into my office, and gave me a great deal of information on many secret matters, without revealing either his identity or the source of his knowledge of Germany and her schemes. If the warnings he imparted were reliable, he must have known the very heart of Potsdam, I thought. One of his items of information was certain details about the threatened use of poison-gas, and he gave me a note of a very simple remedy—not then a matter of general scientific knowledge, though I suppose every “Tommy” in this country has now learned of it.

But his most important statement was an outline of the plans Germany had for her High Seas Fleet—not to mention for the Grand Fleet!—when the right moment had arrived. And, he said, Germany was working quite steadily, quietly and confidently to bring about this right moment—to arrive at “*der tag*.”

“Can you sketch?” he asked me. “I have little time and can explain better so.”

But I was a bad hand at drawing, I felt, and so the Italian naval officer proceeded to sketch on sheets of paper from my desk rough plans illustrating the intentions of the High Seas Fleet. His sketches and explanation of them were indeed an eye-opener.

Germany, he said, intended to carry on their campaign of U-boat depredations, thickly-sown mine-fields, sinking at sight, etc., until such time as our Fleet was reduced to a practical equality of strength with the High Seas Fleet. When the time came when

Germany calculated that this scheme was satisfactorily effected, then at her own convenience she meant to give battle. After putting up a good fight the High Seas Fleet were to withdraw and lure the Grand Fleet into a network of mines from which escape would have been next to impossible.

The Italian's chart of these naval plans was sufficiently startling in itself, and the informant left at the end of half an hour's concentrated talk as abruptly as he had come. I may add that, in the light of official documents published by both sides after the War, his information proved to be correct in almost every particular. The naval officer himself, we found later, was a member of the Italian nobility.

When Admiral Hall arrived soon after the departure of the visitor, he was tremendously disappointed that he had not been present to meet him and hear his story. He would no doubt have ascertained far more than had fallen to my lot ; it was not, of course, in my province to ask searching questions under the circumstances.

The Admiral was keenly interested in my story and the officer's sketches. He considered this visit to be of vital importance.

"He's leaving for the Continent to-night, you say ? Then can you find him in London before he goes ?"

"I'll try," I replied, though I felt that to find a needle in a haystack would be child's-play in comparison.

An Admiralty car was placed at my disposal, and I set out, first making arrangements for all the principal hotels to be rung up in the hope of locating our visitor. But though for hours I went back and forth to the various Continental stations and left

explicit descriptions of the gentleman with innumerable station officials, I drew a complete blank. Nor did the enquiries at the hotels yield any information. There was no trace of him and we never saw him again.

The Italian's story was immediately rushed by special messenger to the Grand Fleet Commander, Admiral Jellicoe, and he and Admiral Hall examined the information from every angle of credibility and doubt. Admiral Jellicoe was convinced of its importance, being particularly struck by the disclosure of the High Seas Fleet's intention to trick our Fleet by withdrawing early from the battle so as to entice our ships into their freshly-sown minefields. His tactics at the Battle of Jutland the following year showed that he had not forgotten.

One could multiply accounts of these multifold activities of naval G.H.Q. indefinitely. But what has already been written throws a light into a secret place where romance went hand in hand with efficiency, and high courage with lively inventiveness. It was the Navy's job to combine these opposites and bring them to the service of Great Britain, the Empire and humanity in the threatening years of the World War. How splendidly the Senior Service achieved its task is a truth which the world is only now beginning to realise.

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HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
KING'S BENCH DIVISION
GERMAN NAVAL OFFICER AND A
BOOK: LIBEL ACTION SETTLED



VON RINTELEN v. HUTCHINSON AND
CO. (PUBLISHERS), LIMITED, AND
ANOTHER

Before MR. JUSTICE ROCHE

A settlement was announced of a libel action brought by Captain Franz von Rintelen, who was an officer in the German Navy, against Hutchinson and Co. (Publishers), Limited, and Mr. Hugh Cleland Hoy, the publishers and author respectively of a book called "40 O.B. How the War Was Won," certain passages in which were complained of by the plaintiff.

Mr. W. N. Stable appeared for Captain von Rintelen; Mr. Theobald Mathew for both defendants.

Mr. STABLE, in announcing the settlement, said that in 1915 Captain von Rintelen was engaged on secret service work on behalf of his country in the United States of America. Mr. Hoy described himself as the private secretary to the Director of Naval Intelligence, and there were passages in the book which were brought to the plaintiff's notice. They purported to describe how Captain von Rintelen was captured. One passage ran:—

When his ship reached Southampton a Scotland Yard detective appeared on the scene, found von Rintelen in his stateroom with a well-known West End actress with whom he had become very friendly on the voyage, and arrested him. He was brought before Admiral Hall at the Admiralty.

He would not read the whole of the passage, said counsel, but it went on to describe a most ridiculous scene. It continued:—

The Director of Naval Intelligence was dissatisfied with the results of this first interview, and a further examination at Scotland Yard was arranged, at which the late Lord Abinger, who spoke perfect German, and myself were present. The cross-examination was barely under way when Lord Abinger suddenly snapped out in German:—

Salute!

Von Rintelen automatically responded by clicking his heels together and giving the naval salute! He was outwitted. The iron tradition of his Service had been too much for him.

The book, continued Mr. Stable, went on to describe how Captain von Rintelen escaped from Donnington Hall. With the exception that Captain von Rintelen was arrested while travelling from America to Germany in a ship the whole of that passage was untrue from beginning to end. In fact the vessel was stopped by a British ship off Ramsgate and Captain von Rintelen was taken off the vessel by British naval officers in uniform. The vessel never went to Southampton, no Scotland Yard detective was present in any capacity whatever, and there was no actress, either well-known or otherwise, on the boat, and if there were Captain von Rintelen never set eyes on her.

The description of the interview with Admiral Hall was an invention from beginning to end, and the incident of saluting was also a sheer invention. And though Captain von Rintelen was ultimately locked up in Donnington Hall he never escaped from it.

The defendants, concluded counsel, had not sought to justify any of the statements. They had been arranged. They had been arranged to publish the book.

Mr. THEOBALD MATHEW made in the proceedings the following statement on behalf of the defendants expressed in their publication.

MR. JUSTICE ROCHE said that the proceedings should be stayed on the parties.

27. 10. 33

